



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

OR
N

LL
ON



ELEANOR DAYTON

5147



BY THE SAME AUTHOR

They That Took the Sword
The Beautiful Mrs. Moulton

ELEANOR DAYTON

By

NATHANIEL
STEPHENSON



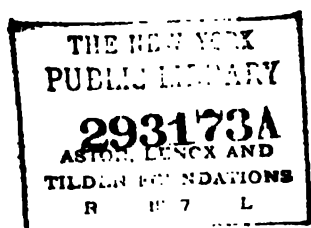
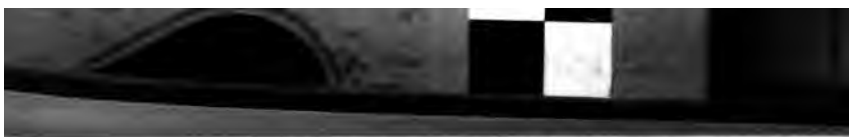
MERCANTILE LIBRARY:
NEW YORK.

M 227.124

JOHN LANE · *Publisher*

NEW YORK & LONDON · MCMIII





Copyright, 1903, by JOHN LANE

First Edition
August, 1903

THE PUBLISHERS' PRINTING CO.
NEW YORK, U. S. A.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. An Emperor Condescends,	9
II. His Majesty's Judgment,	18
III. A Defiance,	26
IV. The Mystery of a Door,	31
V. Eleanor's Mother,	37
VI. The Tree of Knowledge,	44
VII. The First of the Beauty,	56
VIII. Dayton of Dayton,	63
IX. Four-in-Hand,	72
X. In the Guise of Apollo,	83
XI. The House in the Hills,	96
XII. That which Wasteth at Noonday,	116
XIII. Under the Shadow,	122
XIV. Mrs. Dayton Foresees Things,	134
XV. Enter Rosalie,	143
XVI. Life and Death,	154
XVII. The Sunset Light,	161
XXVIII. A Price is Paid,	163
XIX. Eleanor Finds Herself,	166
XX. In which Tom is Fooled,	172
XXI. Masquerade,	177
XXII. Revelation,	183
XXIII. We Part with Rosalie,	188
XXIV. At St. Antoine's,	199
XXV. How Tom was Proven,	202



CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
XXVI. The Life Everlasting,	207
XXVII. How Carroll Found Himself,	213
XXVIII. Olivia,	225
XXIX. Miss Dayton's Own,	229
XXX. Past and Present,	233
XXXI. The Mailed Fist,	244
XXXII. When Man is not Alone,	246
XXXIII. The Trembling Scale,	251
XXXIV. Ashes to Ashes,	254
XXXV. Pro Patria Mori,	259
XXXVI. A Gentleman of Yesterday,	263
XXXVII. Mr. Dayton Begins Again,	278
XXXVIII. Eleanor Finds her Place,	283
XXXIX. Journeys End in Lovers' Meeting,	301
XL. Sic Transit,	307



ELEANOR DAYTON

*"Oh, it's ill to loose the bonds that God
decreed to bind.*

*Still will we be the children of the
heather and the wind.*

*Far, far away, oh, it's still for you
and me*

*That the broom is blowing bonny in
the North Countriee."*

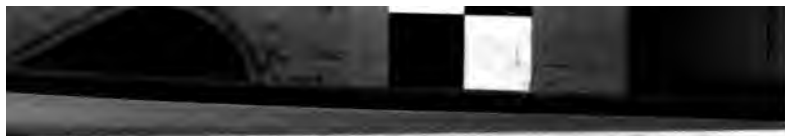
MERCANTILE LIBRARY.
NEW YORK.

ELEANOR DAYTON

CHAPTER I

AN EMPEROR CONDESCENDS

IT was a fashionable studio in the days of the Second Empire—an immense room, forty feet long and broad and high in proportion, whose gigantic north window let in floods of clear light from the direction of the Luxembourg. Its contents would have set up a first-class antique shop. Armour, tapestries, Persian rugs, furniture curiously carved of teak or sandal, diaphanous Oriental veils with strange faint perfumes playing hide-and-seek in their folds, Crusader's hauberks, kaftans from Algiers, enormous swinging lamps from a Bagdad mosque, marbles, bronzes, drawings, paintings, souvenirs of famous persons, portraits of women, autographs—everything. In fact, there was a great deal too much. It betrayed itself. A shrewd observer would see at once that it was designed to impress visitors quite as much as to be serviceable in painting—perhaps more.



ELEANOR DAYTON

Anatole St. Antoine, the famous St. Antoine, of the treacherously brilliant technique, who has saved to us all the beauties of Louis Napoleon's court, was exhibiting his year's work at a private view. It was a select company. Not above forty people were present, some of them very great people indeed. It was even whispered that the Emperor himself might condescend to appear. His Majesty's portrait by St. Antoine, with the Empress and the Prince Imperial, had been painted the year before. That impassive face, those cold, strange, calculating eyes, had seldom been so ably rendered. "That is the man," said Louis, after studying the portrait; but he added a moment later: "I mean that is what the man is capable of being."

St. Antoine received the Legion of Honour.

As yet, however, the Emperor had not appeared, and no one could say positively whether he would come or not. Those were the days when Louis walked or drove about Paris affecting a simplicity which was wholly spectacular. But even without the Emperor the party was distinguished. There was a Bavarian envoy who was charged by his sovereign to induce St. Antoine to spend a winter in Munich; there was a minister; a general with a dozen stars; two or three famous beauties, among them the Englishwoman, Lady Sefton, and others.

ELEANOR DAYTON

Also, there was Metier. All Paris in those days knew Metier. He had been St. Antoine's master and was the great conservative painter, though his pupil was now the chief revolutionary one. All the same, St. Antoine was the first to acknowledge his debt to Metier. "He made my gymnastics—what these Americans would call my 'high-wire performance'—possible," he would say. "Had it not been for the training under Metier I should have got a great fall and broken my artistic neck long ago."

St. Antoine said that, on this very afternoon, in response to a remark by Lady Sefton. The allusion to Americans was induced by the canvas they were looking at. It stood in the place of honour on an easel fronting square to the great north window. The beauty of the subject could not be denied, nor the bold assurance of the technique. St. Antoine openly admired his handiwork. But Lady Sefton, for some reason, did not seem to approve.

"I don't like these Americans," said she. "And besides, I believe you have helped her out. I don't believe she is as good-looking as that in reality."

"Ah, madam," cried the painter, "do not fall into that error. I paint people as they are, not as they seem to be. Is this the Miss Dayton you have seen——"

ELEANOR DAYTON

"I never saw her," cut in Lady Sefton brusquely. "I don't especially care to."

"Pardon," continued St. Antoine blandly. "When I had the happiness to paint your ladyship there were people who said they did not believe you had so noble a face. Said I: 'It is the potential that illuminates—it is that which I paint.' When you see mademoiselle—she will be here this afternoon—do not look at this in the light of her, but look at her in the light of this. I explain her to you."

Lady Sefton laughed and would have answered, but was interrupted by a general exclamation: "Is it the Emperor?" She heard the noise of a carriage stopping in the street below and turned with the rest toward the window.

"It is not the Emperor, said the general with the dozen stars as he pulled in his head, "only two ladies and an elderly gentleman, an officer, I think."

Lady Sefton turned again to the canvas of honour. As she did so, François Metier came and stood beside her. He was a reserved-looking man, past sixty, with a very noble, thoughtful brow.

"I trust your ladyship admires it," said he.

"Monsieur Metier," said Lady Sefton, wheeling toward him, "do you know that girl?"

"I have the honour."

"And I suppose," said Lady Sefton with a sharp

ELEANOR DAYTON

laugh, "I could not possibly make you tell me what you think of her."

"On the contrary, it would give me pleasure. Mademoiselle Dayton is most high-spirited, charming, and—what shall I say?—she has eyes that think—but there is something else—she has distance, atmosphere—can you not see what I mean? St. Antoine has exaggerated, as is his way, but this look you see here, this lofty expression, it is in the original too."

Again Lady Sefton laughed. There was more than mere irritation in her laugh; there was something defiant, even anxious. The tone of her next remark was almost malicious.

"They call her a great flirt, don't they?"

Metier pulled his grizzled beard, and his grave eyes looked thoughtfully for a moment into the flashing orbs of Lady Sefton.

"And have not many beautiful women been called that?" said he.

Lady Sefton threw up her hands and turned away from him. Her face darkened and she bit her lip. Following the direction of her eyes, Metier saw two people standing together. One was Eleanor Dayton, the American girl, the original of the portrait. The other was a stalwart young Englishman. He asked the person next him who that was talking to



ELEANOR DAYTON

the beautiful American. He learned it was Lady Sefton's brother. He lifted his eyebrows, and walked away toward a table where were wines and ices.

"'All the world's a stage,' as their Shakespeare says," thought the famed Frenchman, "and the play must have its foolish part as well as the grand ones. But milady will never understand that girl."

The three people who had got out of the carriage a few moments before were this American beauty, her aunt, Miss Dayton, and a cousin, a white-haired old officer, Colonel Joseph Mallon. They had been in the studio several minutes before Lady Sefton turned and observed the girl. By that time St. Antoine's effusive greetings had been concluded and he had whisked away, having heard another rumble of wheels and thinking that it might, at last, be the Emperor. Lady Sefton's brother had joined Miss Eleanor; her aunt, wishing to rest a moment before looking at the pictures, had sat down beside an acquaintance. Colonel Mallon had gone to the wine table. They had driven some distance and the day was warm. It was because he saw Mallon there that Metier turned the same way. The two were tried friends.

"Ah, François, have some champagne?" cried Mallon, setting down his glass and holding out his hand;

ELEANOR DAYTON

"devilish hot day. I'm thirstier than I ever was in America, and that's saying a lot. What do you think of the girl's picture?"

Metier laughed, the quiet self-contained laugh of one who lives chiefly to himself and yet is not morose.

"You know what I think about Anatole. I wonder who else does? But to the point. It is a pretty romance founded on your cousin. I wish he would not call these things portraits."

A shade passed over Metier's face, but was gone almost instantly. With a smile full of kindly feeling he took up his glass, saying cheerfully: "But I'm of another day. And I heartily praise his technique. Well, my friend, let us drink her health. May she continue as good and as beautiful till she dies."

They clinked the glasses, and still had them at their lips when both started and almost let them fall. A voice had cried:

"The Emperor!"

Napoleon came into the room slowly, with a slight inclination of the head, first on the right then on the left, in recognition of the courtesying women and bowing men.

He wore a general's uniform, but without a sword, and he leaned upon a cane. His eyes were lustreless. The still mask of his face was without expres-

ELEANOR DAYTON

sion. His movements, however, expressed both age and weariness.

"Ah, St. Antoine," said he to the bowing painter, "what have you done for us this year?"

"Will your Majesty be so good as to make the circuit of the walls. This, sire, is the portrait of the Duchess of Suffolk; this is the Princess von Waldstein; this——"

In eager sentences the voluble St. Antoine poured out an account of his creations, or, rather, of the beauties on whom they were based. The Emperor listened with scarce a flicker of interest. Only once did he speak. As they neared the last of the hanging portraits he said: "Are the originals of any of these here, St. Antoine?"

"Of one, sire, of this last—my masterpiece for this year. Will you be pleased to turn this way?"

The Emperor was before the portrait of Eleanor Dayton. He stood a moment in silence. Then he said: "I will sit, St. Antoine."

As by magic, a great chair, one of the treasures of the place, had been drawn into a position convenient for observing the picture. With a short nod to every one generally, to no one particularly, Louis Napoleon sat down. He put up his left hand and stroked his imperial. After another moment of silence he asked: "And who is she?"



ELEANOR DAYTON

"An American lady, sire—Mademoiselle Eleanor Dayton."

"Did you say she was present?"

"She is here, sire."

A faint smile crossed the Emperor's face.

"Say to her that I request the pleasure of comparing her portrait with the original."

CHAPTER II

HIS MAJESTY'S JUDGMENT

THE people who called Eleanor Dayton a flirt admitted that she had none of the usual arts. In repose, her face was gravely sweet. As she grew interested in talk it was quickened by a sort of blithe frankness. She looked straight at you. As talk continued, she grew animated, her colour glowed, the brightness of her eyes was deepened: it was as if her spirits mounted steadily upon wings of inward laughter. And yet she seldom laughed out, though when she did it was in a ringing freshness of tone. She smiled much, and her smile was graciousness itself.

Captain Orville, Lady Sefton's brother, had dangled about her during six weeks at Nice. The matter had got to his sister's ears, and that haughty beauty was not only indignant, she was alarmed. She felt he was taking chances on betraying his family, for the house of Orville was still new, with its way to make. The grandfather had retired from trade with a million sterling; the father, having squeezed out from beneath that shadow, had set up

ELEANOR DAYTON

for a gentleman philanthropist; the brother and sister were to establish the family in marriage. As to Lady Sefton, she felt she had done her duty. Her husband was a viscount, her children would have all one could wish in the way of position. There was but one detail unfinished: the brother must marry rank. And behold! he was risking getting caught by this American. No wonder Lady Sefton was alarmed.

The girl's portrait had increased her uneasiness. When she charged St. Antoine with flattering her, she was really whistling to keep her courage up. "If she looks like that," said Lady Sefton to herself; "but, pooh! everybody knows that St. Antoine flatters. What would we have him for if he didn't? But you might subtract a lot from this face and still have something dangerous."

No one was ever subjected to sharper or more hostile scrutiny than Eleanor Dayton during the first moment Lady Sefton watched her. Captain Orville had just then come up to her, and the girl had begun speaking in that manner of kindling graciousness which was the bridge by which she passed from repose to animation. Lady Sefton was just too late to catch the first aspect of her face, the fine calm of it, when at rest, giving hint of a latent power to be resolute; but she could not blind herself to the frank-

ELEANOR DAYTON

ness and blitheness, the deepening glow and warmth of it, as the girl rose steadily in animation.

"But the portrait flatters her just the same," thought her ladyship. "What a fraud St. Antoine is! She's not as dangerous as I feared, but she's dangerous enough."

And Lady Sefton turned aside to make use of her own handsome eyes in less legitimate ways.

It was just then that the Emperor was announced. Instantly talk ceased. Every one drew back, bowing or courtesying, and there was silence while he made the slow circuit of the walls—silence, except for the eager buzz of the explaining voice of St. Antoine. The painter spoke in low tones, as if he knew of no ear on earth except the Emperor's, and his words were not distinguished by his guests. Neither could they make out what the Emperor said to him. When Louis said he would sit, the expression and gesture of St. Antoine were what conveyed the idea to the rest. The few sentences about Eleanor's portrait were spoken in the same low monotone. No one but St. Antoine heard him ask to see the girl. When St. Antoine bowed low and walked away from him the entire company was wondering what the Emperor wished.

Until now Eleanor had not been alarmed. In spite of her reputation as a flirt she was unusually

ELEANOR DAYTON

free from self-consciousness. For several minutes she had lost herself in the new sensation of watching, close-to, that great enigma of French politics, the sphinx-like Napoleon. With eager interest her eyes followed him around the walls. She forgot Captain Orville, forgot that her own portrait was the crown of the show. It did not occur to her for a time to be afraid of what might follow. That man was Napoleon! That tired, lagging man with the mask-like face was the heir of him of Arcola, the Emperor of the French.

And then suddenly she was aware that he was studying her own portrait, that he had asked for a chair and was sitting before it. The possibilities flashed upon her; the room swam.

"Good heavens!" said she, turning to Captain Orville, "can't you get me out of this?"

His manner was full of confused solicitude as he replied: "Oh, really, Miss Dayton, are you ill? We could not go before the Emperor. Can you not bear up? Here comes St. Antoine. I'll ask him to whisper to the Emperor. His Majesty is most gracious to all foreigners."

St. Antoine, with eyes as bright as coals, was already bowing low before Eleanor.

"His Majesty, mademoiselle, my master, the Emperor of the French, commands me to say to you

ELEANOR DAYTON

that he requests—may I emphasize his consideration for your country?—he requests the pleasure of comparing your portrait with the original.”

A surge of hot blood rushed to Eleanor Dayton’s face. For a moment all other emotion was lost in anger. He had no right to do this. Emperor though he was, he should be gentleman first, and the gentleman should have remembered that she was an American; that she would not know how to conduct herself; he should not have subjected her to this ordeal. The next instant she was aware that every eye in the room except the Emperor’s—he was gazing unmoved at the portrait—was fixed on her. Some had heard St. Antoine speak; the others had divined it. In Eleanor, anger gave way to pride.

“They are watching to see the American fail,” she thought.

In another moment a coldly beautiful girl with her head held high had swept out from among the silent company and was before Napoleon. She courtesied almost to the floor.

With a slight start as if coming out of a brown study, the Emperor stiffened himself; then threw his weight upon his cane and rose to his feet.

“Mademoiselle,” said he, in a low but distinct tone, speaking slowly in English, “I salute the American people. Your goodness will let me study

ELEANOR DAYTON

more deeply the work of this eminent painter. Will you take the same pose, there—ah, I am indebted.”

He sat down again, and Eleanor moved to the place he indicated.

Then followed what seemed to her the duration of hours; it was really but a few moments. The Emperor sat silent, rigidly erect, one hand on the arm of his chair, the other on the head of his cane. He gave no sign of life, except in the slow movement of his eyes back and forth between the girl and the picture. The room was absolutely noiseless. When at last he said languidly, “Merci, mademoiselle,” there was a general intake of breath which was distinctly audible, like the whistling rush of air into a vacuum.

Eleanor courtesied low and stepped back into the ranks. He looked at the portrait a little longer. Then he rose, leaning, as before, very heavily on his cane.

“Let us have some wine, St. Antoine. I would drink a health upon this occasion.”

He moved toward Eleanor as he spoke.

“Mademoiselle,” said he, “I fear you are tired after keeping that pose so firmly. There will be wine in a moment. Let me say that I have proved St. Antoine to be a romancer. You have much to suffer before you look like your portrait. I had

ELEANOR DAYTON

hoped it was so. You are too young for so high an expression."

Necks were craned to hear, and several people edged closer on tiptoe. Lady Sefton threw a mocking glance at the painter. Old Miss Dayton, a frail, slight little woman, stepped quietly to her niece's side and put a hand on her arm. Eleanor had started and turned pale, as if the Emperor's words had touched some hidden spring that released her emotions.

Louis Napoleon, for all his impassive face and his dull eyes, was one of those men who see everything that goes on. He noticed Eleanor's change of colour, he noticed how unimpressed was the little old woman, with the quietly satisfied manner, who had stepped to Eleanor's side. His faint smile showed an instant and was gone. Something else had claimed his attention and almost commanded surprise.

"Your Majesty," said Eleanor, "tell me what you mean."

She had recovered herself. The pallor was gone, and in its place was heightened colour. She breathed quick. Her eyes contained a challenge. She had the proud alertness of a Diana; her expression was that of one who defies fate. For a moment she looked like her portrait.

ELEANOR DAYTON

"Sire," whispered St. Antoine, "am I not justified of my creation?"

The Emperor stroked his imperial, looking steadily at the girl. He was Fate personified—cold, unmoved, inscrutable.

"Mademoiselle," said he, "your portrait is the aspect you would wear after you had passed through a great tragedy. Monsieur St. Antoine was very clever to see that; very audacious to paint it. But I trust I cause you no alarm; that there are no traditional terrors in your family as in some of ours in Europe. Again, I thank you. Ah, the wine—mademoiselle."

Napoleon took the glass that was offered him and with just the trace of a bow handed it to Eleanor. Taking another glass, he looked about the room and said: "To the great American people." He drank a part of his glass, and then with that same slight inclination of the head, first on the right, then on the left, and with no further notice of Eleanor, he walked slowly from the room.

Eleanor, staring after him, while all the other women made their deep courtesies, remained erect unconsciously, the Emperor's wine-glass in her hand.

CHAPTER III

A DEFIANCE

THE departure of the Emperor released forty tongues. In half a minute they were going a clack-clack. The gossip vivaciousness congealed by his cold presence crackled out again in its natural flow.

Eleanor, of course, was the centre of interest; rather it was divided between herself and the wine-glass in her hand. People gathered about her, aiming comments at the glass.

"What an incident, mademoiselle—to have been offered wine by an Emperor!" cried one.

"To have been presented with a cup by the Napoleon," said another. "What an heirloom you possess!"

"It will be as good as a patent of nobility—will it not?—in America," asked Lady Sefton.

"What a job you'll have preserving it!" cut in Orville, with a laugh. "It's like saving an egg-shell."

"The glass belongs to Monsieur St. Antoine," said the quiet voice of the elder Miss Dayton; "shall I put it down for you, Eleanor?"

ELEANOR DAYTON

The girl turned to her aunt, and her eyes were at their brightest. There was a flashing quality in her beauty that moment: something Miss Dayton did not like, something brilliant but unsteady, as if excitement, or surprise, or whatever it was which had caused that sudden pallor, had reacted upon too high a pitch.

"Monsieur St. Antoine would give it me, aunt, I think, if I asked him," said Eleanor.

"Mademoiselle," cried St. Antoine, "how can you imply that it is not yours already? Did you not justify me to the Emperor? For one magnificent moment you were what I foresaw."

"What a price for a pedestal!" murmured Lady Sefton. "To be singled out by an Emperor as the Beauty of the Tragic Future!"

"I say," whispered Orville, "can't you let her alone? Can't you see she's upset by it, for all she carries it off so well, by Jove!"

Lady Sefton's answer was a supercilious laugh.

But Eleanor had overheard both remarks and had noted the tone of the laugh. She bit her lips. There was still more in her manner of that uncertain brilliancy which her aunt disliked as she turned toward St. Antoine and said:

"I am not so young, monsieur, as not to know that much of what has been said is mere compli-

ELEANOR DAYTON

ment. But why did you choose to foresee tragedy for me? Why could you not have foreseen happiness?"

St. Antoine shrugged his shoulders.

"Consult the glass in your hand. If I had given you a simper and the expression of every-day, would the Emperor have been arrested? Would that glass be in your hand?"

Eleanor's inward tension was threatening to give way. The Emperor's words had indeed touched a secret spring, one known only to herself, of which even her aunt had not guessed. She felt as if an unhealed wound had been roughly probed. In the effort to conceal her agitation she was putting on bravado. She paid no heed to her aunt's low words: "My dear, this is getting ridiculous. Let us go."

Holding up the glass and looking about her with an air of defiance she said: "But what if this were not in my hand. I am not European. We Americans do not value such things."

Lady Sefton could not hold her tongue. In the overwhelming distinction between them all and the Emperor, the minor distinctions separating them from each other had been, as it were, expunged. In the reaction from that august presence, women who did not know each other were talking freely as people will do, forgetful of themselves, in the presence

ELEANOR DAYTON

of a calamity. Even Lady Sefton, who showed ordinarily the exclusiveness natural in a parvenu, felt the levelling power of the moment and forgot her punctilios. She spoke out, sharp and biting, and the envious waiting-maid at the bottom of her nature stood revealed.

"I would risk it that I know a great social reputation that will issue with the bubbles of the champagne from the stem of that wine-glass," said she.

"And do tell us, mademoiselle," lisped a French voice, "what it was you were frightened by? Why turned you so white? We are sure there is some dreadfully romantic fate in your family. What will your tragedy be?"

Eleanor's suppressed excitement flashed forth at these rude remarks.

"There will be neither the one thing nor the other," said she. "We ask no aid of a wine-glass, nor are we afraid of fortune-telling, no matter who is the teller."

"Mademoiselle despises the Emperor's gift but she retains it," sneered the French voice.

Lady Sefton's cool laugh made a discord on Eleanor's ears.

"And yet you turned white," said her ladyship.

"Did I?" said Eleanor, looking Lady Sefton

ELEANOR DAYTON

square in the eyes, looking at her so disdainfully that she fidgeted and drew back.

Eleanor gave a short laugh, not at all in her usual tone. She drew herself up, swayed a moment with uplifted arm, and then, in a superb gesture, lithe and graceful as the stroke of a leopard, flung the wine-glass across the room. It struck against a smooth space of woodwork, with the effect of a miniature shell, flew into a puff of glass-dust, and was scattered upon the floor in a little rain of glittering specks.

"One moment, mademoiselle, that pose!" cried St. Antoine, who had snatched up a pencil and was dashing lines upon a tablet.

CHAPTER IV

THE MYSTERY OF A DOOR

IF there is any truth in the proverb that the longest way round is the shortest way home, the thing to do is to cast back and pick up the thread of Eleanor's life at the point where it issues from among her people. Knowing what I do of her story, I believe that in this case the proverb applies. Therefore let us begin at the beginning.

Far from imperial Paris, in a town on the banks of the Ohio, stands a beautiful, classical mansion, which is still called the Dayton House. The man who built it, old Enfield Dayton, was one time a power in the land. In this house, in the days "before the War"—those days which already seem half a myth—great chiefs of the Whig party sat down and drank Madeira—sometimes more than was well. Here General Harrison, foredoomed to be President of the Republic, who had a place called North Bend, sixteen miles down the river, would often pass a night. It was here that Henry Clay, on a famous occasion, sat at table during six hours. In the front chamber, south of the hall, is the bed in which for

ELEANOR DAYTON

one night lay Daniel Webster. In no castle in England do they show with more unction the bed in which Queen Elizabeth slept, or the one where Charles I. slept, than at the Dayton House is shown "Webster's bed."

This house stood out distinct in Eleanor's earliest recollections, burned into the child's memory by the branding iron of fear. The material facts of the case are recorded in Enfield Dayton's diary. He was a voluminous diarist and almost always made two entries a day, night and morning. The second entry on this occasion is as follows:

"10:30 P.M.—Since I laid down my pen, this morning, two things have happened for which we should be grateful to Almighty God. First, my niece, little Eleanor, brother John's child, appeared without warning of any kind on our doorstep, about eight, to-night. Second, though attended only by a foolish and muddle-headed negro nurse, the child had come all this way from her home without harm. Praise be to God, for His mercy endureth forever!

"The incident was most peculiar. We had sat at table somewhat later than usual, and no lights had been sent into the front part of the house. Suddenly the bell was rung with violence. While waiting for the tardy servants to answer it, we were startled by a loud cry. It was shrill and piercing

ELEANOR DAYTON

and the voice was that of a child. It seemed to come from our front steps. Both Eliza and I started up and hurried to the door. Being the first to reach it, I flung it open and was at once aware of a little mite of a figure standing on the top stair and trembling in every limb. Picking it up and taking it into the light, I recognised her as my brother's child. Eliza with a taper (and several servants with others) was at my side. Eliza at once took the child and soon had soothed it to rest.

"While concerned with the child, we heard a stupid chuckling laugh from the doorway and, turning in that direction, I beheld the negress. I recognised her as a servant of my sister-in-law. My anger at her insolence was so great, I reproved her so severely, that she turned sullen, and when I demanded an explanation refused to give it. Eliza, however, who always rules her temper, had more success. The negress quailed before her quiet gaze and delivered the letter from my sister-in-law, which I insert here upon the opposite page.

"The child seems to be well. The cause of her terror was probably no more than a sudden consciousness of being alone. The silly negress, giving play to that crude dramatic sense so prominent in her race, had stolen away after ringing the bell, so that we should be surprised by the sight of the baby

ELEANOR DAYTON

alone. No one familiar with this race can doubt its incapacity ever to rise above the mental level of children.

"I leave for St. Louis in the morning. See letter opposite.

"My poor sister-in-law!"

"My dear," said Miss Eliza to Eleanor, years afterward, "that cry was as piercing as anything I have ever heard. We had started to our feet while it still sounded. And you were such a pitiful little figure standing there in the starlight. I was only a few steps behind your uncle, and my taper threw a gleam upon your face so that I saw you with some distinctness. Your little fists were clenched and beaten against your breast. Your eyes were wide with terror, your lips apart and trembling. Your hat, I remember, had fallen back and was held behind your head by the string around your neck. If black Susan had been my servant she would have been sent about her business in a hurry."

"Poor old Susan," Eleanor would say, "I haven't the least recollection of her. That moment on the steps is the very first thing I can remember. I recall that I had a vague sense of having come from somewhere, of having been where I was for a moment only, but that is all. There are no faces, no

ELEANOR DAYTON

objects, no happenings in my recollections before that moment. Everything else I remember comes after."

Eleanor had often talked it over in this way with her aunt.

"It is so strange," the girl would say, "but that moment is as vivid as yesterday. I remember the look of the house, of the stars, I remember the queer feeling that seemed to come both from without me and from within, and above all I remember the door. I cannot tell whether I knew what it was or not. But for some reason it was a thing of terror. It seemed to reach up into the stars and contained a dreadful menace. I felt myself draw all together and shiver, I know not why. I remember looking behind me. Then my eyes flew back to the door. Then the fear came."

At the purple edge of memory stood forever, in the imagination of Eleanor Dayton, that solitary little figure in the starry night, confronting the mystery of that closed door. She never forgot the thrill of that unnamed terror. It visited her in dreams. But along with the terror survived a cloud of witnesses of other sorts. She still saw, as with the eyes of that child, the enormously tall man, with his head among the stars, who flung open the door and bent down and took her up, a dizzying height, as it

ELEANOR DAYTON

seemed, in his arms. She remembered that the child was not afraid of that apparition. And she still heard the tones of his voice as he cried out: "Bless my soul, Eliza, it's John's little girl." She remembered her change from fear to wonder as Miss Eliza took her from his arms and turned away toward the stairs. She remembered the row of tapers, the startled faces of the servants, and then the great four-post bed and Miss Eliza leaning over and kissing her. Lastly, she remembered how the child sprang up in the midst of the bed—how vast it seemed!—flung her arms about the little woman's neck and cuddled up to her with a gleeful laugh.

So it happened that Eleanor's remembered life began with the sense of dread, of being alone before a closed door, but also with a buoyant reaction and laughter.

CHAPTER V

ELEANOR'S MOTHER

JOHN DAYTON, Eleanor's father, was the youngest of eight children; Enfield Dayton was the eldest. There were nearly twenty years between their ages. John had entered the army and was a little late in marrying. Thus it happened that Enfield's oldest son was the age of John's wife. Mrs. John Dayton was but a girl when she married and still very young when she was left a widow. Their child was then scarce a year old. The father had been thrown from a horse he was breaking and never returned to consciousness.

Laura Dayton was extremely pretty, very sweet and gentle, and wildly in love with her husband. But she was not a commanding nature. To be plain, people called her weak. She and her husband were the ivy and the oak. Until John Dayton saw and loved her she had never had the support she needed. Suddenly that support was given her and Laura became another woman. But she was not of enduring stuff. Not even her child was sufficient motive for her to stand alone. From the day they brought

ELEANOR DAYTON

home her husband dead, her passing may be dated. She came out of her fainting fit the former Laura, the clinging, timid bundle of nerves she had been before. It was worse than that. Those nerves had all been strained beyond their limit.

She continued to live at St. Louis, where John had been stationed when they were married, though Enfield Dayton wished her to bring her child and live with him. She had a house in St. Louis, and her memory clung fondly, unsteadily, to the places she had known with her husband. But she asked her brother-in-law to be guardian to little Eleanor. When he was out to see her at Christmas, following John's death, she said to him, smiling feebly, like a ghost: "It won't be for long, Enfield. I am not for this world. Now, don't tell me I am weak and should think of the child. I do think of her. I know I am weak. I know I am unworthy. But you will take good care of Eleanor?"

Mr. Dayton promised, got a promise in return that she would draw on him if she needed money, and went back to the great house he had recently built in Cincinnati.

During the spring, Laura drooped wearily. One day in April she fell down in a faint. The doctor who attended her sent word to her only relative that her condition was critical.

ELEANOR DAYTON

When Laura opened her eyes, one afternoon, at the sound of voices, and saw the face of a man in the doorway, she sat up in bed with a cry.

"Well, my dear," said he, coming into the room and sitting down by the bed—he was a large, soft, unctuous man—"I am sorry you are so far gone. Why didn't you let me know sooner?"

The man was her step-father, the trustee of her little estate, who had always used her ill.

"Go away," said she feebly, "please go away."

"My dear child," said he, "you are but twenty-four and I am your trustee till you are twenty-five. I take charge of you from this time forth."

Hitherto Laura had lived alone with her child and two negro servants. Now her step-father made himself a member of her family, or almost that, coming and going continually and overseeing all that was done. At last, he spoke to her about her will. "You had much better make a will," said he. "Appoint me your executor and trustee for little Eleanor."

"That is all you are here for?" she cried; "I wish you would go. I hate you. My brother Enfield Dayton is already the girl's guardian."

The step-father scowled so darkly that Laura covered her face with her hands. Thereafter she had

ELEANOR DAYTON

but one idea: to get Eleanor safe to her kinsfolk in Cincinnati, while she herself still lived. The poor, weak girl-mother was not quite in her right mind or she would not have risked the means she used. Fearing to send for her brother-in-law lest somehow her step-father prove too much for him, fearing to use any agent that would attract observation, she staked everything on her negro nurse. It was Laura's old "mammy" who stole out of the house, one summer night, with Eleanor, then two years old, in her arms.

At the Dayton House, as we have seen, the old negress, by indulging her racial instinct for the spectacular, made trouble. She was reprov'd so sharply by Mr. Dayton that she threatened to post back without explaining her errand. But when Miss Eliza came down after quieting Eleanor, Susan knew in two minutes that it was all up. She meekly handed out a letter from Laura.

Both Enfield Dayton and his sister hurried to Laura, leaving Eleanor, for the moment, in the loving care of other kinspeople. But they were too late. With tears running down her face, Miss Eliza could scarce keep back her impatience. It irked her that Laura was so willing to pass on the burden of her child, was so absorbed in her own heart-break.

ELEANOR DAYTON

"What if her heart is broken," said Miss Eliza to her brother, "it is her duty to John to take his place so far as she can till God calls her. She's not being true to her love by giving up in this way."

Enfield Dayton looked sadly at his sister.

"My dear," said he, "all women are not as brave as you."

There was a grief in Miss Eliza's life that gave the words point. But the one thing that betrayed her 'into sharpness was any reference to her own troubles.

"Fiddlesticks!" she snapped, shaking the tears out of her eyes and drying the lids with her handkerchief. "Enfield you are foolish at times."

Her brother laughed softly, but there were tears in his eyes, for both brother and sister were as tender-hearted as children.

"I don't agree with you, Eliza," said he gently. "This poor girl would not do well as a mother, and you will bring the child up. God is being merciful to us once more."

"God sometimes disguises His mercies very darkly," said Miss Eliza, and clapped her handkerchief to her mouth just in time to choke a sob. She turned her face and walked quickly from the room. Her thoughts had bridged a long loneliness. She

ELEANOR DAYTON

was a girl again, that one instant, and her troubles were all before her.

But she was gentleness itself with poor Laura.

"I know you must despise me, dear Eliza," said the girl, "but you'll be good to Eleanor?"

"Yes, dear, now don't fret. All things are for the best in the end, and this life, you know, is only for a little. Let me smooth that pillow. There, you are easier now."

To her brother the brave little woman said meditatively: "I wonder how much of Laura is in the child? They have the same eyes. It's a lovely blue. But there's a look of John in her also."

"Let us hope for the best," said old Enfield.

"Let us make the best," said Miss Eliza. "Don't give me any of this nonsense about incurable defects of character. Children are chiefly what we make 'em." Then she laughed. "Perhaps you think it is easy for me to say that because I haven't any. But Enfield, some of us childless women are as true mothers as any. And I tell you one thing, what you call heredity is half the time nothing but imitation."

"Didn't I say it was better for the little one?" said her brother.

"Oh, Enfield!" remonstrated Miss Eliza.

Before long the end came. They brought her

ELEANOR DAYTON

dust to Cincinnati and buried it in one grave with her husband, where her monument stands this day. Miss Eliza went home from Laura's funeral resolved to do her utmost for the child who had Laura's eyes but John's firm mouth.



CHAPTER VI

THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE

ON the horizon of memory, where for most of us is a bank of haunted shadow, Eleanor saw always that scene on the Dayton steps, clear-cut, like an island of brightness on a darkened sea. Behind it was an impenetrable blank; in front, certain wandering mists among which various figures moved gradually into plain sight. But all these were clearly on this side the horizon. So far as Eleanor was concerned, they had never inhabited the purple distance beyond that line. In this, you will notice, she was unlike most children. Most of us, as we look back down the avenues of the memory, see ourselves come across the horizon hand-in-hand with others. And as with people, so with places. There is a spot of earth with which we have no consciousness of ever having come to it. We were there, as we say to our childish selves, always. As we follow our memories backward, we and certain other people and the place recede together, all in one company, and are lost all at once in the shadows of the horizon. Not so with Eleanor. That sudden

ELEANOR DAYTON

fright upon the Dayton steps had struck a line prematurely across her life. The memories that had been taking shape in her had been checked. A new starting-point was established, one which she could remember. And so there grew up in the child's mind a sense of her own identity singularly definite. All those people about her she had consciously met. The place she lived in and all other places she ever saw she had consciously come into. Her life was a drama which had begun, not only for others but for herself, as the actual play begins, upon the sudden lifting of a curtain. A singular condition! In those bold experiments to find oneself—bolder than is generally realized—which Eleanor, like all children, was forever being impelled to make, this condition was the key to much that was unusual.

Long afterward when she was old enough to look upon her childhood with the searching eye of retrospection, she marvelled at the difference between herself and other children. She had never known an affection that lost itself in distance. No human being was clothed for her with the morning lights of mystery. Her uncle, her aunt, her cousins, everybody, were people from whom, as she well knew, she had once been separate, with whom she could recall step by step the procession of feeling.

One of the great events in Eleanor's life was the

ELEANOR DAYTON

discovery that this was not true of every one. She and her neighbour, Tom Wilmot, were playing in the back garden. Both of them were very little, Eleanor as great a romp as the boy. They were resting on a bank of grass beneath a plum-tree. One of Eleanor's characteristics, as a child, was a swift alternation of mood. Buoyant and noisy in play, she would pass through a moment of rest into brooding silence. On this day Tom had flung himself down, stretched out his arms, and was lying flat on his back gazing up at the sky. Eleanor was sitting with her back to the tree-trunk. Her hands had linked themselves unawares and fallen in her lap. She had a dainty, lady-like way of holding herself that any passer-by would have noticed. The first glance at the elegant little figure would have been followed by a second at the lovely face. There the attention would have been held by the wide-open dreaming eyes. And only a moment before she had been romping and shouting as if for dear life.

"Say, Eleanor," said Tom carelessly, "we're going out to Spring Grove Cem'try to-morrow—won't you go along?"

Eleanor had been far away in the heart of a dream. She came back slowly, turned her grave eyes upon Tom—they had been such sparkling eyes but a few moments ago—and said:

ELEANOR DAYTON

"What are you going for, Tom?"

"'Cause Saturday's Decoration Day. We always go out the day before and put flowers on my mother's grave."

Tom was three years older than Eleanor and felt himself, by comparison, quite of the world. He realized that a small boy who had a mother's grave to put flowers on was more of a personage than one who had not. He could not remember his mother, nor had he very clear ideas about graves and what they signified. Eleanor had none at all.

"What is a grave, Tom?" said Eleanor.

"Why, don't you know? Didn't you ever see a grave?"

Eleanor shook her head.

"Well it's about so long, and so wide, and so high. It's a little bit of a hill. Didn't you ever see Rover's grave?"

Again Eleanor shook her head.

"I helped dig it," said Tom. "We put him in a soap-box and then we put the box in the hole, and then we made the grave on top of it."

Eleanor leaned against the tree-trunk and her gaze wandered forth into the sky. Presently she said, as if thinking aloud: "I haven't got any mother."

"Yes you have," said Tom; "she's dead."

"Just the way yours is," said Eleanor.

ELEANOR DAYTON

"Guess so," said Tom.

Eleanor said no more. Tom forgot his invitation for the morrow, and there was no more philosophy that afternoon.

But that night when her aunt was undressing her, Eleanor said: "Auntie, does every little girl have a mother?"

"Yes, dearie."

"And have I got a mother?"

"Of course you have."

"Where is she?"

"She's in heaven, where we'll all be some day."

Miss Eliza looked into Eleanor's deep eyes and something troubled her. What strange, inexpressible problem was being wrestled out in the little brain behind those eyes? She stroked the child's hair, hoping she would ask more questions, but hardly daring to anticipate any. But Eleanor kept silent.

"Come, dear," said her aunt, after waiting some while, "say 'Now I lay me.'"

Eleanor laid her head on Miss Eliza's shoulder, put her hands together and repeated the prayer. Not long after Miss Eliza left her.

In the middle of the night she waked in her aunt's arms. She was sobbing and had a sense that something was hanging over her. She seemed still to be

ELEANOR DAYTON

in front of that dreadful door, which had so terrified her the night she came. She had seen it just now as she waked up.

"Look, aunty, look, it's go—going."

She pointed at the wall opposite. Plainly the dream had transferred its image to the wall and was just then fading out. The cry in her sleep with which the child had wakened her aunt, in whose room she slept, was similar to the cry of that night on the steps. Miss Eliza took Eleanor into bed with her and soothed the child to sleep.

"What have the children been talking about?" thought Miss Eliza. "Is there any connection between this fright and those questions about her mother?"

Miss Eliza watched in vain for a solution. Eleanor hid her problem in the curious silence of childhood. Instead of asking, she went about, as the child so often will, to experiment and discover. She delved into the minds of her playmates, asking subtle far-away questions, but dimly comprehended by herself, only half answered by her informants. Nothing is stranger than the ways by which children explore each other, except, perhaps, the ways by which they inform each other, half-revealing, half-concealing, things so deep that grown-up folk find it hard to phrase them. But before long Eleanor reached a

ELEANOR DAYTON

conclusion, a momentous one. She had grasped the difference between a mother and an aunt. A mother had been with you "always." An aunt was some one you had learned to know. Her little cousins who had mothers could not remember a time when their mothers were not with them. But Eleanor remembered, perfectly well, the first time she ever saw her aunt. Plainly, she and her cousins were altogether different.

But her aunt said that all little girls had mothers. Then what had become of hers? Her aunt said she was in heaven. Tom said she was dead. What was being in heaven? What was being dead?

Gradually Eleanor built up the idea that people go away and are not seen any more; gradually she associated the taking of them hence with that word which she heard so much in the daily prayers, with God.

And now the little dreamer began to listen during prayers. That long service, each morning, after breakfast was over, began to hold her attention. She was convinced that it was God who had taken away her mother and father, who had made her different from her cousins. Why had He done it? Why should she be different from the others? Why

ELEANOR DAYTON

should not she have a father and mother just as they had?

There was no grief as yet in these questions. The time had not come when she could grasp their significance. Nor as yet was there fear. She had not begun asking what might happen next. On the contrary, for a time, all other speculations were lost in the question, What is God?

We are to imagine her now as a slip of a girl. She has beautiful deep blue eyes, glossy brown hair, a colour like dewy roses, an inborn grace of motion. She overflows with life. But also, she has those swift alternations of mood.. She can lie in the grass through a whole afternoon dreaming about the clouds. It is worth our notice that she never has asked herself: When did I first see the clouds? Children do not ask such questions about things they have always known. Those companionships which antedate the memory go unquestioned until memory becomes self-conscious; until we attempt "the riddle of the painful earth." What is noteworthy in Eleanor's case is that this sort of companionship does not attach itself to anything human. The clouds, the trees, the rain and the sunshine, the entire procession of the day, she treasures unaware. To it she gives that dreaming affection which otherwise would have centred about father and mother. The

ELEANOR DAYTON

sunshine is her personal benefactor; the rain, an implacable enemy. It is on rainy days that she recalls the time when she was alone in the night before that closed door; it is on rainy nights that she is most likely to dream of it.

Imagine such a mind listening intently to the prayers of a pious old Presbyterian fifty years ago! Romping little girl upon the outside, wondering little mystic within, with no deep feeling, as yet, for anything human, Eleanor searches through the phrases after God. And there were so many phrases and they were so strange! What could she do with that army of terms—predestination, free-will, election, grace? It was only in the stories of God's action, in the nature of the direct appeals to Him, that the little seeker found clews. And these, alas! pointed all one way. How sternly, how unconsciously, that high theology misinterpreted itself to the child! The cry of human weakness, phrased in the terms of God's might, became to Eleanor a prolonged reiteration of the sense of being menaced. Something was hanging over us. Eleanor recalled her own feelings, that night at the door, and her delicate limbs quivered. All of human life, apparently, was face to face with a closed door. At any moment it might fly open and the awful would descend upon us. It was God who kept it shut; God

ELEANOR DAYTON

who would fling it open; God who had begun by making her different from her cousins, and had taken away her father and mother, before she could even remember them.

One prayer, in especial, made a deep impression. It was uttered on a beautiful spring day, when the windows stood open, little breezes fluttered cheerily into every corner, and without the air rang with bird-calls. No day could wear less of the face of danger. How should the child know that on that day, as for many a day before, the Republic was as a ship labouring heavily? The large political terms in her uncle's speech were no more to her than the theological ones. It meant nothing to her that he was crying out unto God to prevent the disruption of his country; to keep "abolitionism" on the one hand and "secessionism" on the other, from tearing asunder, "like two beasts of prey," this great Republic. It was the latter part of the prayer, the part in which he warmed into pure theology, that sank deep into the child's mind. It was the cry of the old-time Calvinist, of one who dwelt continually beneath the shadow of things to come, for whom—in the mind, at least—life was full of menace, and happiness was elusive.

"We remember, O Lord," prayed Enfield Dayton, "that we know not what a day shall bring forth.

ELEANOR DAYTON

Thou hast shut the future from us as in a pavilion, from the strife of tongues. We are nothing in ourselves, and thou, O Lord, art all in all. We venture not to protest against thy will for us, but forgive, O Lord, the weakness of thy servants, and fill our hearts with strength, even like a cup to overflowing. If it be thy will that we should be greatly afflicted, bestow upon us the endurance of thy servant of old, that we may bear our burden with gladness, and lift up our voices and cry, 'Blessed be the name of the Lord.' "

There was a quarter of an hour of this heroic fearfulness. Eleanor slipped away from it out into the glad sunshine, and flung herself upon the warm fresh earth. How good it smelt in her nostrils! How bright the sunshine was; how loud and clear the bird-calls! She sat up suddenly and looked attentively clear round the horizon. There was not a shadow of rain anywhere. She lay down again with a happy sigh.

But the dread which was in that prayer still crept upon her nerves. Was God always taking things away from people? He had taken her father and mother. Her uncle seemed afraid God would take away his happiness. Was it God who took away the sunshine and sent the rain?—the rain which she hated. And her uncle seemed to feel that God was

ELEANOR DAYTON

getting ready to do something like that all the time. Could He be getting ready to send the rain on her, even now? She sat up and again studied the horizon. There was no sign of the evil, and yet—she shivered and into her ears came broken sentences.

“We know not what a day shall bring forth we venture not to protest against Thy will for us if it be Thy will that we should be greatly afflicted”

She felt another shudder, and then for the first time during sunshine she felt the terror of the night before the door. She flung herself upon her face in a passion of tears. As almost always happens, comprehension had come, at last, as by the bursting of a dike which the sea had been slowly undermining. Something had given way within her and the rush of new feelings swept her far from the old anchorage. In a few seconds she had crossed so much mental space that the things she had wondered about a moment ago seemed lost in remote distance. New phases of existence had arisen, gleamed a moment and been left behind, like stars seen through cloud from the chariot of the winds. Her life had been totally changed, for love had entered into it. As she lay face down in the grass she was sobbing:

“What if God should take uncle and aunt!”

CHAPTER VII

THE FIRST OF THE BEAUTY

ON the day when she first put up her hair, Eleanor made a great discovery. She discovered that she was beautiful. There was a children's party that day at the Dayton house. The broad, low house with its Ionic portico and outlying wings, its wide steps between sandstone lions, was a pleasant relieving background to the groups of children who made bright the lawn beneath tent-like beeches.

All the cousins and aunts were there and some of the uncles. Mr. Dayton in broad-brimmed Panama hat, and silvery Colonel Mallon in uniform, sat at one side, with two or three others, and there were wine-glasses on the little table before them. The breeze was warm enough to be caressing, the air cool enough to be glad of it. The beeches stirred gently so that the network of sunshine and shadow flickered lightly across the romping children.

"She's the beauty *par excellence*," said Colonel Mallon, after a pause, during which they had watched the children. "Enfield, she is going to be the best of the family."

ELEANOR DAYTON

"To protect my own daughters," said old Enfield, "I must insist that you are saying a great deal."

"I am, sir. My cousins on the Dayton side will bear any comparison, but that child will outdo them all. Just look how she walks. There!—see that. See how she stops and speaks to little Olivia. She is grace itself. And she has an air—by nature, perfectly unconscious. Enfield, I have seen a great many beautiful women in my day, but I declare the best of 'em all is coming. By Jove, I'll be the first man that ever drank her health."

He drained his glass, snapped the shank and flung the pieces across his shoulder.

"May she live long and be as beautiful to the end," said he.

But Colonel Mallon was not the only one who was captivated by Eleanor that day. All the grown folk were struck by her beauty. Perhaps it was the trifle of putting up her hair, perhaps it was destiny. It was something. A new quality had come into the girl. Her air that day established her as a beauty. The elder people whispered together, throwing glances at the radiant girl, and more than one came over to her uncle and pledged her future.

The girl knew perfectly well what they were talking about. She read their eyes like books. That whispering and glancing in her direction made it all

ELEANOR DAYTON

so apparent. She was a beauty, recognised as such by her elders. She, little Eleanor Dayton, was a personage. Upon this thought her spirits soared. Her eyes flashed; her colour glowed; without knowing what she did she took on arts and graces; she became an inimitable little coquette.

When the children began to go, she dismissed them one after another, as if she were a miniature duchess.

"Egad!" said Colonel Mallon, from a distance, "but I'm glad my youth is over. She'd do the trick for me."

But when the last child was gone, Eleanor surprised the elders by disappearing into the house. Her intuition saw the difference in saying good-bye to those elder ones. To them, she was only a show. She had not realized this before, and it hurt. After all, she was only a little girl. Also, she began to feel tired. She had had her time to soar and it was past. And the older people looked down on her. She was only a pretty little girl to be patted on the head. And this, in spite of the fact that she had done up her hair.

She went upstairs with lagging feet and into her room where she sat down wearily on the edge of the bed. Her eyes roved aimlessly about the walls. She wondered whether she really had im-

ELEANOR DAYTON

pressed Tom Wilmot as much as she thought she had.

She heard the footsteps of her aunt in the hall without, and her pulse quickened. Dear old aunty, how she should like to kiss her that moment!

"I don't care what the rest think," said the girl to herself, "Aunt Eliza loves me, and uncle Enfield, and I love them."

Her door opened and Miss Eliza, smiling brightly, came in. Eleanor sprang up to meet her.

"You are my dear little girl," said her aunt, kissing her, "and you were so sweet to-day to the little children. I am proud of you, dear."

Eleanor nestled against her aunt and her eyes shone.

"I love you, Aunt Eliza," said she.

"I know that, little one, and all of us love you. We were all so pleased with your kindness and sweetness to-day. Here is something I am going to give you."

She put into Eleanor's hands a miniature of a girl.

"Hang it up somewhere and call it your own," said Miss Eliza.

"Oh, aunty!" as she flung her arms about Miss Eliza's neck.

For a long time Eleanor had wanted this miniature. The first time she saw it she felt she had

ELEANOR DAYTON

found a friend. By some swift intuition she felt that it was of right hers. She and that girl in the little oval of pearls went together. She knew they did. Time and again she had taken it down from its nail in the morning parlour and gazed upon the lovely face—the rich brown hair, the delicate features, the deep blue eyes. She had never asked for it, never even spoken her joy of it, nor asked who it was. The silence of her first childhood lasted with Eleanor, more or less, all through life. She had no more impulse to ask about the miniature than she had once had to ask what was a mother. But Miss Eliza, watching her, unobserved, read the girl's mind. To-day, when the others had been chattering about the child's beauty, she had said to herself: "They'll be saying that to her presently, but I'll get in ahead of them."

Eliza Dayton had suffered in her own life—suffered deeply—from not seeing far enough ahead. But she had learned the lesson. She was now looking far into the future, and just what she had in view will appear in another chapter. For the present it is enough that she had resolved to give Eleanor the miniature for which she longed.

"Do you know who it is, dear?"

Eleanor shook her head.

"It is your mother's aunt, Mary Carroll. She

ELEANOR DAYTON

was once supposed to be beautiful. I'll tell you some day all about her and how I came to have this picture. There is another portrait of her that I will show you when you are older. But she was a lovely girl to begin with. When she was young, before the world had spoiled her, she must have been much like you. Here, dear, I must go now."

Eleanor went over to a window and threw herself down on the floor with her head on the low window sill, the miniature in her hand. It was hers! And that girl was her own kinswoman. She had felt that all along, but she liked hearing it. How lovely she was!

For a time Eleanor gave herself up to the joy of possession. Where should she put it? By her dresser, over her bed, or by the little desk, in the corner, which her uncle had just given her? She sprang up and tried one place after another. It would be nice by her bed, for then she could reach out and have it with her in the early morning. Her desk, though, would now be the place where she sat by herself during many an hour. But how about the dressing-table? It would be pleasant to look into the girl's face while she did her hair. She could fancy she was going to balls and the girl would talk to her about the balls she had gone to long ago. There was something intimate about the

ELEANOR DAYTON

dressing-table that seemed to make it the right place.

By mere chance Eleanor turned the miniature toward the glass so that the two faces, her own and Mary Carroll's, were reflected side by side. Her eyes dwelt lovingly on the latter. But by degrees something forced itself on her attention. Suddenly she became aware what it was—

"Why, I look like her," cried Eleanor.

Now, she looked from one reflection to the other searching them for likeness. It was there in a degree that was almost startling. Mary Carroll had bequeathed her wonderful eyes, it would seem, to her niece, who was Eleanor's mother, and in the grand-niece these same eyes had reappeared. But, except for the eyes, that beautiful Mary had been palely shadowed in the timid Laura. It was in Eleanor that the beauty flashed forth again. As her eyes devoured them she saw that the two faces tallied exactly, line for line, shade for shade.

"Oh, you dear," cried Eleanor, kissing the painted face, "and to think that I look like you!"

CHAPTER VIII

DAYTON OF DAYTON

WHEN Eleanor was fifteen she went to visit her kinspeople in Maryland.

The Daytons derived from a pious Scotchman who sought refuge in America about 1750. Tradition has it that he was "out" in '45, and therefore fled the country. His name, to be sure, is not especially Scotch and may point eventually to an English origin. His religion, also—for he was a strict Presbyterian—must have been out of place in the Pretender's army. On the other hand, why did a Presbyterian go to Catholic Maryland without reason? Jacobite politics could unite even Rome and Geneva.

Be all that as it may, Malcolm Dayton settled far up on the Potomac and drew about him a little town of Presbyterians, called eventually by his name. They were simple pious folk who prayed earnestly that the Lord would send a minister, but apparently lacked funds for the purpose. They met in each other's houses and the records of those meetings are preserved to-day by the session of the Presbyterian

ELEANOR DAYTON

Church of Dayton, in Maryland. From these records it is plain that Malcolm, the immigrant, was a sort of ruling elder, an informal patriarch of the biblical sort, a man of rigid piety and of carnal force. In the Revolution he raised a regiment and fell with honour early in the war.

The two branches of his descendants both prospered, but the eastern line was the lucky one. They were the elder branch; they inherited the first place in their region; they held the office, so to speak, of hereditary Chief Person in the church; for now some while the head of the family had been called Dayton of Dayton.

The relation of the two branches had always been cordial, though their intercourse was spasmodic. Now and then some wandering Dayton from Maryland would turn up in Cincinnati, be housed and feasted, and then sent on his way after promising to return. Once in a year, perhaps, some western kinsman would stop at Dayton, in Maryland, on a journey to the coast, and be shown the same clannish hospitality. Miss Eliza had visited her kinspeople several times in her youth. But when, in the year '54, Miss Eliza took Eleanor on a visit to Dayton, there was a double reason why the girl should feel at home there. For the present generation of the Daytons of Dayton were related to her both through

ELEANOR DAYTON

father and mother. A generation earlier, two brothers of the name of Carroll inherited a small estate near Dayton. Their sister was the beautiful Mary, who had a career and ended unhappily. Of the brothers, one stayed where he was and became father to another Mary, not especially beautiful, who married Dayton of Dayton in the year '37. The other brother went out to Missouri, married there, died there, leaving Laura, his daughter, who as we know also died young, leaving Eleanor. And that was the end of the Carroll family. It was older, more renowned than the Daytons; there were romantic stories attached to it. One or two of its men had been gallants and duellists of the old stripe. That Mary the Beauty had still a fame. The strange story of her life was still told. But except for Eleanor and the one son of Dayton of Dayton, no descendant of the Carrolls survived.

Laura and Mary Carroll never saw each other, and not until now had Mary seen Laura's child. They had known of each other, of course, and they had sent each other wedding presents, and once in a great while had written. It was with a distinct thrill of pleasure that Miss Eliza contemplated the surprise in store for Mrs. Dayton of Dayton. "If any of her other relatives are as lovely as Eleanor, I should like to see her," thought Eleanor's aunt.

ELEANOR DAYTON

But it was not merely to show the child off that she took her to Dayton, on the way to a famous boarding school in Philadelphia, that summer of '54. There was a portrait in one of the upper rooms at Dayton—a portrait of Mary Carroll in her cruel decline—and this was the chief end of the journey. "Eleanor will remember it always," said Miss Eliza to herself, "if she sees it now. She is just the right age."

The house at Dayton was not unlike that other house in Cincinnati which had been adapted from memories of it. Here, as there, a central block beneath a pediment was flanked by low-lying wings. Here also was the stone portico—only this was Doric while in the west it was Ionic—and the flight of broad stone steps. In the parent house the steps were ungarnished. The couchant sandstone lions set up by Enfield Dayton showed the taste of a later day.

It was a merry fortnight which Eleanor passed at Dayton. She and her cousin Carroll, just a year older than she, a brave and handsome lad, became the best of friends. She thought, on the whole, that she liked him better than Tom Wilmot. He was so jolly, he rode so well, and he had none of Tom's lordly ways.

Her likeness to Mary the Beauty was noticed of

ELEANOR DAYTON

course by every one. She was shown a great portrait of her, a full-length Gilbert Stuart, in the drawing-room at Dayton.

"I won't show her the one upstairs," said Mrs. Dayton to Miss Eliza, with a significant look.

"Not yet," said Miss Eliza.

The likeness to the famous Mary was so marked that word of it got abroad and kinspeople rode over to Dayton from distant estates. One night the great dining-table was as full as it could hold and every one was chattering to Eleanor about her astonishing likeness to the famous beauty. The girl flushed and was pleased, and yet was a little ashamed also. Even then her sense of humour was beginning to be tyrannical. The larger part of her said to herself: "How fine all this is!" But a certain part, as yet very minor, whispered low: "How silly this is!"

Presently some one asked Mrs. Dayton if she didn't have the very gown in which Mary the Beauty had been painted by Stuart. Yes, it had been preserved with other heir-looms. A general chorus demanded that Cousin Eleanor put it on. At this the girl shied. Her sense of humour protested. It would be making a spectacle of herself. She shook her head and cried out that she should feel like a fool. But to her surprise it was her aunt who urged her most.

ELEANOR DAYTON

"Go on, dear, I want you to do it," said Miss Eliza.

"You really do, aunty?" said Eleanor.

"Really"; and then in a low voice which no one else heard: "I have a reason, dear. Please do it."

Eleanor resisted no further. She went upstairs with Mrs. Dayton while the rest of the company gathered in the drawing-room. They looked again at the famous portrait of that famous beauty. They recalled old stories about her exploits—the ball she opened with La Fayette—the flirtation she had with the Spanish ambassador—hosts of gay adventures. But now and then something would slip out of another sort, something that would instantly be hushed with a glance at Miss Eliza. Once a woman whispered to her neighbour: "She can't know the whole story or she wouldn't have let the girl dress up."

Suddenly there was a general start, a ripple of applause, then the room rang with it. Eleanor had entered softly, moved out in front of the portrait and stood facing them in the same pose as the picture. Mrs. Dayton had said to her: "As long as we are in for it, cousin, let's do it well. I'll distract their attention; you slip in and take the pose and they'll all be carried away."

They were. They declared that the two could not have been told apart. They showered her with

ELEANOR DAYTON

compliments. Presently Miss Eliza said: "Now, really, you have turned her head sufficiently for one night. Come, Eleanor, I'll go up and help you out of these things."

They left the drawing-room together and on the stairs Eleanor put her hand in her aunt's arm. She was slightly pale and her brow was troubled.

"Why did you want me to do it, aunty?" said she.

Miss Eliza put her arm about Eleanor's waist.

"Because you are a beauty, dearest, and people will always be silly to you, as those people were to-night, and I want to teach you a lesson you will never forget."

"I'm not so vain that I didn't feel like a fool the whole time," said Eleanor.

"But it might not seem foolish as you look back at it to-morrow, if I did not show you what I am going to show you now. It's in here."

She led the way into one of the large spare chambers, and Eleanor, still in her antique gown, faced a portrait of a woman. At first she did not recognise it. Then she saw that the eyes were the same. Then she realized.

The girl downstairs was not yet twenty. This soured, hard woman had not reached forty. But what a difference! All of us who have eyes for faces have seen Time take a face to pieces. I do not mean



ELEANOR DAYTON

by that the ruin which comes of age, which is merely change, not destruction, which is but the conversion of the beauty of power to the beauty of peace. I mean that rending apart, as it were, of the inward harmonies on which the face must rest. Have you not seen a beautiful oval distend gradually to an ugly oblong? Have you not seen a face grow out of drawing—seen the lower part get too big for the upper? And then there is the failing of the colour, the thickening of the skin, the embittering of the mouth, the darkening of the brow, the over-clouding of the eyes. All these defects had come out in the mature face of Mary Carroll. Eleanor shuddered as she looked at it.

“You see, now, why I wanted you to dress up?” said Miss Eliza.

“Oh, yes,” cried Eleanor. “She is horrid—will I ever look like that?”

“No dear, never. You and she are not the least alike. She was a shallow, selfish, heartless jilt. When her beauty began to fade, she lost all her influence. She became a mad woman—or as good as that. You can see the bitterness eating up her soul in this picture. Only the outside of you two is alike. But I wanted you to see this so that the chatter about beauty should be robbed of its force, so that you will never pay any heed to any fool of a man



ELEANOR DAYTON

who tries to flatter you about it. You will remember this, Eleanor?"

"Always, as long as I live."

"And now I am going to ask you to do something for me. I am going to have this copied, made into a miniature the same size as the one you have. I'll have this one set in pearls just as the other one is. And you'll promise me always to keep them together, side by side."

"Yes, aunt, always."

Miss Eliza kissed her.

"Now, dear, let's get these things off," said she, "and get back to the drawing-room."

CHAPTER IX

FOUR-IN-HAND

ELEANOR came upon the town, as the old phrase was—"came out," as we say to-day—just seventeen years from the night when she was left on the Dayton steps. Mr. Dayton's diary shows that her ball was an exact anniversary. Both events were on the twenty-first of August. Eleanor had turned nineteen in July.

It was a whim of hers, as we find from the diary, to have the ball on the twenty-first. "That is my real anniversary," she would say, and in spite of every one she insisted on keeping that date as her birthday. When she was asked if she thought thereby to take two years from her age she laughed and said she had no age, that the calendar was a myth.

As a beauty she had fulfilled her early promise. Never was a girl more queenly, with more of that quiet air of being equal to anything, that air which is never assertive yet goes so far. She was still as inimitably graceful as on that day of the children's party, years before. Her beauty was of that brilliant atmospheric sort, the reverse of statuesque, which



ELEANOR DAYTON

seems in some women to come forth and pervade their immediate air, so that we see them through a haze of loveliness. Her eyes had the blue of the outer sea, the sea that has not been fathomed.

In those days the city was not abandoned during August, and Eleanor's ball was a great success. Even then her reputation as a beauty had extended beyond her family. On the night of her ball she was generally pronounced incomparable.

"My dear," said old Colonel Mallon, who was the only man but one with whom she danced that night, "you are——"

And then he paid her a compliment which was in substance precisely the same as these graceful lines, written since that day:

"The Graces are four, and the Venuses two,
And ten is the number of Muses;
For a Grace and Muse and a Venus are you,
My dear little Molly Trefusias."

"Now come, Cousin Joseph," said the girl, "I resolved I wouldn't dance with any of those fellows to-night, for they are so silly. But I believe you are just as bad."

It was getting late and Eleanor was seated at one end of the drawing-room. She was flushed and a little tired, but also happy and triumphant. Colonel

ELEANOR DAYTON

Mallon, seated beside her, leaned forward, put his hands on his knees and spoke as seriously as if addressing his general.

"I am a prosy old bachelor, but I'm your father's first cousin and inside the family, we can tell the truth. Eleanor, you are the greatest beauty we have ever had."

The girl threw back her head and her laugh rang out.

The severe soldier, who had been a beau of the formal old *régime*, straightened himself in his chair, crossed one leg over his knee, and put the tips of his fingers gravely together. In his youth girls did not laugh at such speeches.

"Beauty is power in a woman," said he sententially.

"Oh, yes, I know, Cousin Joseph," said Eleanor; "but if a girl can see the joke there is such a ridiculous side to it. How do you do, Cousin Carroll."

She nodded to the handsome young man who came up to ask where her aunt was.

"I declare she must dance, at least once," said he. "Are you going to stand firm all night, Cousin Eleanor?"

"Quite firm," said she. "I want to begin life gravely, you know. I'll be frivolous as any very soon."

ELEANOR DAYTON

Carroll Dayton laughed and passed on. He had come out to Cincinnati expressly for Eleanor's ball. He wished she would dance.

"A fine lad," said Colonel Mallon. "But, Eleanor, why not dance?"

Her eyes sparkled mischief.

"So that my Cousin Joseph should say that I danced with nobody but him."

He tugged his mustache and looked sternly at his boot.

"Eleanor, you are beginning to trifle with people at the very start. You take them too lightly."

She looked at him with a peculiar inward laughter in her eyes, and just the trace of a smile about her mouth.

"Perhaps," said she, "I take myself too seriously."

Before he could demand an explanation there was a scared little scream that came from the dining-room.

"It's Olivia's voice," cried Eleanor. "What is it?"

Little Olivia Dayton, only thirteen years old, who was devoted to the stately Eleanor, was seeing her first evening party, and she had come to grief. It was that handsome blundering Carroll Dayton who was to blame. He had undertaken to draw a champagne cork, and Olivia, standing just behind him, got the wine in her face.

ELEANOR DAYTON

"Oh, oh, oh!" she cried, "I'm drowning."

Carroll wheeled about and was all attention and apologies. The girl had shaken it out of her eyes and was laughing. Many people tittered.

"Give me a napkin—quick—two or three of them."

He seized an armful.

Just then Eleanor and Colonel Mallon came into the room.

"Don't you tell 'em," cried Olivia. "I won't. We'll say something exploded."

But Carroll insisted upon the truth.

"I'm so clumsy," said he. "I don't wonder you didn't want to dance with me. You knew it intuitively, I suppose."

"Cousin Joseph here has been saying that I take people too lightly," rejoined Eleanor. "So you will not think I gave especial thought to your particular case."

"Won't you take pity upon my misfortune and restore my reputation?" asked Carroll. "Otherwise, I must get the name of a hopeless blunderer."

An expression of amused good-humour crossed Eleanor's face. She liked this big boy, and his boyish way of taking things.

"Let me see," said she, "is there any possible ground for making an exception?"

ELEANOR DAYTON

"Give him a dance, Eleanor," whispered Olivia, "just on my account."

"Carroll is your kinsman," said Colonel Mallon; "he is the guest of your uncle, and he is a stranger in a far country. He has come all this way for your ball. You should dance with him."

"And he's made a fool of himself," said Carroll, "and he feels he's getting red. Don't you think you can make an exception?"

"Do it, Eleanor," whispered Olivia.

"Here is your best advocate," said she, laying her hand on Olivia's shoulder. "Come, Cousin Carroll."

The real reason why Eleanor went to dance with her stranger cousin was that she did not want to talk further with Colonel Mallon. She had said too much in saying that she took herself too seriously. She was rather taciturn, was this beautiful young woman, and it provoked her to have commented upon herself. Also, he looked on beauty as a career, and had a way of dilating upon it, which tempted greatly a quick-witted girl who had humour. She genuinely liked that precise old beau, who had been in his day one of the bravest of soldiers, and she had no heart to scoff at him. If that talk went on she knew she should.

But in getting out of one box, Eleanor had got into another. The dance was scarcely over, she and

ELEANOR DAYTON

Carroll had scarcely sat down, when Tom Wilmot joined them.

"I am so glad to see that you have changed your mind, Eleanor. May I have the next dance?"

"Ever so sorry, Tom, but I've not changed my mind. I am not dancing to-night. This dance with my cousin was an exception. You know my cousin, Mr. Carroll Dayton?"

Tom nodded. The men had spoken before.

"But surely, Eleanor, if you are dancing at all, you will give me a dance," said Tom, putting emphasis on the "me."

She shook her head, smiling.

"Not to-night, Tom."

"Oh, well, as you please, of course," said Tom loftily, as he turned away.

"See what I've got into," said Eleanor to Carroll. "All through too much good-nature and just to please—Olivia."

Carroll pulled himself together. He had expected a different termination. He turned and looked into her eyes. She was looking straight at him, that slight smile hovering about her mouth. There was something peculiarly frank, calm and open in her gaze. And at the back of it was that silent laughter.

"I say, Cousin Eleanor," said he, in a gush of boyish candour, "you're not a bit like most girls."

ELEANOR DAYTON

She continued to gaze at him and her face did not change, though he became more conscious of the smile in her eyes.

"Sure?" said she.

"Yes," he replied. "In the first place—" his heart fluttered and he wondered if he dare say it, but he went on—"you are handsomer than they are."

The smile in her eyes overflowed and her lips parted. She shook her head, still looking at him.

"You are all bitten with the same disease," said she. "But in what other way am I peculiar?"

Before answering, Carroll looked steadily into her eyes for a half minute.

"Hanged if I can say it," said he, "but you give a fellow such a funny feeling. You have such a curious way of looking at him. He thinks you are not laughing at him—you aren't, are you?"

"No," said she.

"But you are laughing at something," went on Carroll, and then, getting red as he spoke, he continued: "The funniest part of all is that a fellow feels you are not going to make a fool of him, but he's dead sure you could if you wanted to."

Again Eleanor laughed aloud.

"Come, now," said she, "let's see what that little girl is doing."

ELEANOR DAYTON

She saw Colonel Mallon coming toward her to say good-night.

"Good - night, Cousin Joseph," said she gaily, "some day I will sit at your feet and you shall cure me of all my faults."

"Oh, my dear, it is at the feet of Venus that Mars should bend the knee."

He insisted upon kissing her finger tips. His departing bow had the military precision of a salute.

"And now for Olivia," said Eleanor.

She found it easy to attach Carroll to the little cousin whom he had showered with wine earlier in the evening. She turned away from them with Tom Wilmot, who had also come up to say good-night.

"Don't go for a moment, Tom," said she; "come out here on the terrace."

They stepped through a low window and were beneath the stars.

"Are you ready to beg my pardon, Tom?"

"I don't think I was rude," said he stiffly.

"Outwardly, perhaps not. Inwardly, yes."

"Please explain."

"Do you know what is meant by trusting a person, Tom Wilmot?"

"I hope so."

ELEANOR DAYTON

"Well, you didn't trust me to-night."

"You are going behind the record, as the lawyers say, with a vengeance," laughed Tom. "It is bad enough to have a fellow's actions come into court, but to bring his very thoughts to the bar——"

"You know what I mean," said she quietly. "Are you going to ask my pardon?"

Tom thought a moment.

"For any outward rudeness I was guilty of, yes. For being provoked in my mind, because you danced with Dayton and not with me, no."

There was silence.

"Tom," said she suddenly, as if coming out of a muse, "you were always a stiff-necked creature, and I don't think you ever have trusted people enough. But there is one thing that happened down there in the garden which I wonder if you remember. Do you recall, one time—I can't place the year to save me—inviting me to go to Spring Grove with you and put flowers on your mother's grave?"

Tom shook his head.

"No, Nell, I don't," said he.

"It began a new world for me," she replied.

"But let's go in."

As she turned toward the house a sudden impulsiveness seized her.

"It's a dear old place, isn't it. I love every brick

ELEANOR DAYTON

of it." She laughed and added: "That also was a result of your invitation to Spring Grove."

"What are you talking about?" said the man. She laughed again.

"I doubt, Tom, if you'd understand if I told you."

CHAPTER X

IN THE GUISE OF APOLLO

WHEN Carroll took horse, at Dayton, and rode off to the railway, fifteen miles distant, he had in his pocket a miniature of a girl. But let us not build romances too soon. It was not a picture of Eleanor. Instead, it was Eleanor's mother. Mrs. Dayton of Dayton was sending it to her kinswoman on the occasion of her ball. Mrs. Dayton, in her heart, felt the Carrolls were the better family. Her husband, to be sure, was perfection and his family was good enough for anybody—else Mary Carroll would never have married into it—but her lord was the pick of the lot, and the Daytons, as a whole, were not to be compared with the older, less fortunate race. It pleased her deeply that the chief of the Dayton beauties was the one who was half a Carroll. The blood of that fated people should yet be the source of distinction, even though their name was gone. And I am not sure that Mrs. Dayton did not, as she watched her son ride away, make the error we mean to avoid, and build a romance too soon.

ELEANOR DAYTON

The picture in Carroll's pocket should not strictly be called a miniature. It was an admirable old daguerreotype. It showed Laura Dayton at the age of sixteen. In the year '33 that picture was sent by Laura to Mary Carroll, but afterward, when Mary was mistress of the great house at Dayton, where there were so many places to lose things, she lost it. When Eleanor visited her in '54, a memory of the daguerreotype revived. "How I should like to find it," she thought, "and give it to her!" But Mrs. Dayton's impulses were generous rather than steadfast. There was a certain family likeness between herself and her cousin Laura, though no one charged Mary with a feeble will. It is not surprising that, after a random search or two, she said to herself: "Oh, well, it will turn up some day—I'll send it to her then," and forgot all about it. When, however, Carroll spoke of the ball, his mother was reminded again of the picture. "I declare," she exclaimed, "if I only knew where that miniature is!" Carroll asked for particulars, got them, and set to work on the search. Into every corner of the great house he delved steadily, with the patience of a mole. At last he was rewarded.

"Bless your soul, my boy," said his mother, "trust the Carroll blood to tell in the long run."

Travelling was uncertain in those days and Carroll



ELEANOR DAYTON

did not arrive at Cincinnati until the day of the ball. The house was all agog; Eleanor—for all her pretence of calm—afash with anticipation; and Carroll took the tone of the moment. He forgot the miniature. It was not until he went up to his room, deep into the night, and had lighted a pipe for a closing smoke before bed, that his memory returned to him.

"The deuce!" he exclaimed. "Why didn't I think to give it to her this afternoon. How she would have prized it! It would have been like having her mother come back to earth for her first ball. Carroll Dayton, you're a fool."

He had indeed missed an opportunity. For, curiously enough, no other picture of Laura was preserved. Until this one was turned up at Dayton, they had all supposed that none existed. Eleanor's sole impression of her mother's face was derived from her aunt's description. "She had your eyes, dear," Miss Eliza would say, "and the same hair, but she was more fragile in her appearance, as well as in health. She had a sweet, appealing, plaintive smile. She resembled very slightly your grand-aunt, that horrid Mary Carroll. You are the image of Mary as far as mere feature goes. But there is something in your face that comes from your father, an expression or something, that will increase as time goes on."

ELEANOR DAYTON

"I hope so," said Eleanor. "Except for dear mother, I am not in love with the Carrolls. My cousin, at Dayton, has a terribly good opinion of herself, Aunt Eliza."

Miss Eliza laughed, but answered: "Don't let us discuss your relatives, my dear. The Carrolls have been people of distinction, and their blood is worth having, even though it has run to vanity in some people."

"But I am prouder of what I share with you and Uncle Enfield, even if it isn't quite so distinguished," cried Eleanor, going to her aunt and kissing her.

"It is good enough, Eleanor, and you need never be ashamed of it. We are a clean stock that has held up its head in the world for a hundred years. That is sufficient past for any one."

"All I want," said Eleanor.

But she had often wondered about her mother. She had looked at the miniature of her grand-aunt, at her own reflection in the glass, and tried to weaken them into plaintive appealing faces that might resemble her mother's. She bit her lips the first time she realized what she was doing—deducting from herself in order to find her mother. But that was the fact, and there was no denying it. "I love you just as much," she whispered to the unformed image

ELEANOR DAYTON

that was eluding her. "Never mind if you were weak, my father loved you, and he was not weak. And I love you, too."

And on that day when her life in the world began, the only likeness of her mother lay forgotten in Carroll's jacket! The dramatic moment had been missed.

"And how the dickens," said the lad to himself, "am I going to explain things?"

Carroll Dayton at twenty—he was just a year older than Eleanor, you remember—was as handsome a youth as you will find. In fact, on the night of the ball he was even more observed than Eleanor herself. It is seldom that we find a modern youth who really suggests a Greek; who has that union of beauty with power, of quickness and openness with supple and graceful strength, of which we think when we name Apollo. When we meet such a youth, we feel like invoking heaven. "This is too much an exception," we say; "this cannot abide with us." Beautiful women we take for granted, but beautiful men seem a disturbance of our order of things, and their beauty but a passing gleam.

Carroll Dayton, at twenty, was such an exception. Six feet in height, he was a faultless athlete. But in distinction from most athletes there was nothing about him to suggest heaviness. He was as grace-

ELEANOR DAYTON

ful as a girl, and along with his physical excellence went that winning sweetness and graciousness of manner without which a youth may be handsome, and even splendid, but never beautiful. People went out of their way to have Carroll speak to them. There is but one metaphor which expresses him, and that is sunshine in April. He seemed to move in brightness. His golden hair, the pink and white skin, the manly regularity of his features, the mouth overshadowed with a smile, the frank blue eyes—all were alive with joy. He was still but a lad, frankly a lad, but if his age could have reaped that promise, what a man he would have been!

When Carroll came down to breakfast the morning after the ball he was a perfect incarnation of April. To be sure, he was masculine, and we think of April ordinarily as feminine. But all things have both aspects. Add the masculine element to your impression of April—to the brightness, the blue and gold, the blending of sunshine and shadow—and the result will be Carroll. His face was overshadowed and his brow thoughtful, like an April in clouds; but the moment any one spoke to him, the light leaped in his eyes, thought vanished from his forehead, the sun was out. He was bothered by the prospect of explaining to Eleanor, but he saw also the absurd side of it. He was honestly mor-

ELEANOR DAYTON

tified at his heedlessness, but the mortification was near to getting lost in a boyish desire to laugh.

Six people sat down to breakfast. Carroll was between Miss Eliza and Eleanor. Opposite him sat little Olivia, regarding him gravely out of eyes whose dangers he had not yet realized. Between Olivia and old Enfield, across the table from Eleanor, sat Olivia's father, Mr. Dayton's eldest son. He and Olivia had been members of the household since the death of Olivia's mother, when she was still a mite of a girl. The son was his father's partner in that law firm of Dayton & Dayton, which still exists; in which, through the strange mutations of fortune, Carroll himself came at length to be a partner; but not through any circumstance which the reader now suspects.

It was David Dayton, in those days, who did the work of the firm. That was why he always left the house immediately after breakfast, without waiting for prayers; why, sometimes, it was necessary for him to have breakfast earlier than the rest; why, often, he went back to his office after supper. His father gave him the experience of a long and able practice and still, in many cases, conducted the argument in court. But the labour of getting up the case fell largely on David. "As for me," said old Enfield

ELEANOR DAYTON

in his genial way, "I'm the reference book of the firm. It is David who does things."

And so, on this morning, the company shrank to five the moment breakfast had ended:

"I must see her alone," thought Carroll; "this is one step toward my fate." Then, in a flash of boyish humour, he hummed to himself the old, old nonsense rhyme:

"Six blue bottles
Hangin' on the wall,
Take one blue bottle
From the bottles on the wall.

He was humming this ancient piece of nonsense as they walked into the drawing-room for prayers. A daintily roguish voice directly behind him whispered:

"Five blue bottles
Hangin' on the wall."

He had forgotten Olivia. He wheeled round and met her eyes. For a moment he almost realized what she was destined to be, but the next instant he was aware only of the impish merriment in her face. He laughed also.

"Did I say it out?" he asked.

She shook her head.

"Then how did you know?"

ELEANOR DAYTON

"I knew," said she, with a saucy nod, and ran across the room to a place by her grandfather.

Prayers were long and leisurely as was Mr. Dayton's habit, and it's doubtful if Carroll paid close attention. When at last they were over, there followed the bustle and circumstance of Mr. Dayton's departure for the office. Both the girls must kiss him good-bye, Carroll must have exact instructions how to find the office in case he wished to, and Miss Eliza must tell him what to order from the grocer, on the way. In time he was gone and Miss Eliza had also disappeared; Carroll and the two girls were standing in the hall. "Now," thought Carroll, "I am in for it."

"Cousin Carroll," said a saucy voice.

"Well," said he to Olivia.

She looked at him with a demure expression and held up three fingers. She beat time on them successively with her right forefinger while she hummed:

"Three blue bottles
Hangin' on the wall.
Take one blue bottle
From the bottles on the wall.
Two blue bottles——"

She wheeled about and ran along the hall and went bounding upstairs. Carroll burst into laughter.

ELEANOR DAYTON

"What is it?" said Eleanor.

"How she found me out I don't know," said Carroll. "But I confess I repeated to myself those nonsense verses as we were coming out of the dining-room, and the little one saw right through me."

"She sees through most people," said Eleanor.

"Cousin Eleanor," said Carroll, "let me tell you why I was counting minutes till the others were gone. I have been very, very forgetful. I am thoroughly ashamed of myself, and I want to make my peace, though I don't see how I can."

Eleanor smiled on him with that straight, calm gaze, that blithe openness of expression, which was destined to become a by-word.

"I can't believe it is anything very serious," said she, "but let's come in here and sit down."

They went into the room that was called the morning parlour, that might be called a library to-day, the room where the family took its ease. There Carroll told his story and gave her the miniature.

"I am awfully sorry," said he. "It was so stupid of me not to give it to you yesterday."

For an instant Eleanor was angry. That was before he gave her the picture. But Eleanor Dayton was always self-controlled. She despised people who showed their emotions on the surface. She bit



ELEANOR DAYTON

her lip and said brightly: "No sense in regretting things, Cousin Carroll. Let me see it, please. You know I have never looked on my mother's face."

Carroll rose as he handed it to her.

"I think I'll go and smoke, if I may," said he.

She thanked him with her eyes. In that look she showed her feelings.

"I'll show you where," said a voice from the doorway, and Olivia was standing there crooking her finger.

Carroll followed her out into the hall and she guided him into a side entry and to the billiard-room at the end of the north wing.

"There are five rooms you can smoke in in this house," said she. "There's this room, and your own room, and grandpa's study, and grandpa's room, and father's room, but everywhere else you mustn't. It makes Aunt Eliza sick. Here are the cigars and everything."

She showed him a cupboard where were cigars and tobacco of various brands.

"Now, Cousin Olivia," said Carroll, as he began to smoke, "how did you know that I was saying 'Blue Bottles' to myself?"

"When?" said Olivia.

"Don't put on innocence. You know when. How did you do it?"

ELEANOR DAYTON

But nothing Carroll could say made the slightest impression on Olivia. She protested over and over that she never had heard him say "Blue Bottles," that she never said it herself and did not know what he was talking about.

It grew plain in time that there was nothing for Carroll to do but yield. The minx did not choose to tell and that was all there was about it.

Carroll blew out clouds of smoke, and for a while neither spoke.

"Cousin Carroll," said Olivia presently, "I am going to give a party for you."

"Are you?" exclaimed Carroll. "I am sure it will be jolly."

"Yes, I went and asked Aunt Eliza while you and Eleanor were talking Blue Bot——"

She clapped her hand upon her mouth.

"Now look here, Cousin Olivia, 'fess up."

"I won't do it," said she. "No use in your trying to make me. Want to hear about the party?"

"Of course," said Carroll, accepting defeat.

"Well, it's going to be a house party. We're going out to the farm to-morrow night. We'll have a lot of folks and a dance. I'm going to ask Tom Wilmot, who was mad last night because you danced with Eleanor and he didn't. You remember Tom?"



ELEANOR DAYTON

He's an awfully nice boy, but he's so stuck up. He's in love with Eleanor, you know."

"He's in love with Eleanor," repeated Carroll. "Oh, is he?"

And now if you want you may begin to build romances.



CHAPTER X

THE HOUSE IN THE HILLS

A DOZEN miles to the east of Cincinnati, Mr. Dayton had a farm. He had bought it years before as a play-ground for his children. Back in the thirties and forties the little Daytons would be sent out into the country for a week at a time. About when the youngest of the children began to lose zest for it, the grand-children recalled them to their senses. To Olivia, who had not yet been taken east for a summer, it was still paradise.

The farm straggled over the tops of some hills from which valleys opened in opposite directions. To the south, about three miles away, the view reached a shining sickle of water, which was the Ohio. To northward, you looked along the bed of a creek which joined, at an acute angle, a small river along which the eye roved for miles. The high land at the head of these valleys was a trysting place of the breezes. In the heat of an Ohio summer the farm was an oasis.

On the top of the central hill, in a beautiful beech



ELEANOR DAYTON

grove, was the farm-house. Two log cabins facing each other, with the intervening space roofed over, formed the core of it. Other cabins had been added from time to time. It was now a sort of checker-board of cabins with roofed spaces like open entries zigzagging in and out among them. Each cabin had its own loft. There were five chimneys, each a small tower of rough stone built outside its cabin wall. The fire-places with their ponderous iron dogs were big enough for a castle.

In summer, the nest of cabins was entirely overrun with vines. Scarce a foot of its walls was visible, and only portions of the roofs. Morning glories with their vari-coloured trumpet-like flowers; sweet honeysuckle that drenched the air with perfume; great tangles of climbing roses; and in places green mats of Virginia creeper. The latest addition to this quaintly accreted building was a wide porch, having many angles, that coasted the walls round two quarters of the compass. So complete was the burial in the vines that the porch was thickly walled along its whole length by flowering verdure.

Some twenty people arrived at this house on the second night following Eleanor's ball. They were all young and were all on horseback. They had assembled at the Dayton house about three in the afternoon. It was a pretty sight, in the slant sun-

ELEANOR DAYTON

shine, among spaces of clear shadow, before those great gates of wrought-iron. Twenty spirited horses held by chattering darkey boys were the prelude to the play. Then, as the last girl rode up—the one they had been watching for to complete the number—out of the house, down the steps and along the walk paved with stone flags, streamed the rest of the company. They were brandishing their whips, or waving their hands, and almost every one was calling out to her, irrespective of the others, some witticism upon being late. They were all as gay as their old-fashioned, bright-coloured dresses—the men, by the way, with their brilliant waist-coats, buff breeches and long riding-coats, outshining the women in this respect. And then the start—the mounting; the ambling up and down of those who had mounted first; the ravelling out of the dense little crowd, like a flower bank at the gate; its dispersion into a street full of slowly moving horsemen and horsewomen, who wove in and out amid sunshine and shadow, as if an equestrian kaleidoscope; then the falling into column, as it were, and the clatter of hoofs as they were off, the long undulating stream of them going steadily through the bars of the sunshine.

Eleanor rode with Carroll. She had not mentioned the picture of her mother since the moment when she took it from his hand. She did not do so



ELEANOR DAYTON

now. "I must thank him again before he goes," she thought, "and this would be a good time, but I can't get the words out." And so they talked of indifferent things, of the ride, the road, the beauty of the afternoon, with its green and golden foreground, its pearly clouds that mellowed in their bosoms to a colour like old ivory, its distant violet hills. "This is all very fine," thought Carroll, "but I wish she'd be a little more personal. And they say that Wilmot is in love with her. He's handsome enough, but I'll bet there's a temper in him."

He turned in his saddle as they were going round a bend for a glimpse of his rival. Tom was riding with Olivia and happened that moment to be bare-headed. He was a heavier, more modern type than Carroll. In looking at him you were conscious of the solidity of his shoulders, of the great chest. He was a brown man—hair, eyes and skin forming all one chord. His eyes were bright and piercing; the face lean, with bones in it; the brow wide, but also strikingly high; the jaw as firm as if chiselled, and coming to a point without loss of strength. In his manner there was none of Carroll's sweetness and winningness. Generally, there was a suggestion of distance, sometimes an unconscious air of authority, and always the possibility of being stern. His merriment, when it came, seemed to rise up

ELEANOR DAYTON

from the deeps, not merely overflow, as did Carroll's.

"He's impressive," thought Carroll, "but he's not my kind."

Then the string of riders straightened out again and he lost sight of him.

"I told tales about you, Tom," Olivia was saying. "Perhaps I oughtn't to."

Tom smiled upon her in a way that was a bit lordly, yet wholly kind and good-humoured.

"You did, did you? Have you been telling anybody, again, that I was stuck-up?"

"Yes, I did. Are you mad at me?"

Tom laughed—a lower, more internal, more chuckling laugh than Carroll's.

"No, you goose," said he, "I'm not stuck-up——"

"Oh, but you are, Tom," interrupted Olivia. "I'm sure you are."

"Have it your own way," said he. "If you never say any worse of me than that, I am satisfied."

"It wasn't worse," said Olivia meditatively, "but I am afraid you won't like it. It just came out before I thought."

"Then that wasn't all?" said Tom.

"Oh, dear, no," from Olivia.

"Out with it, little one. You are not afraid of me, are you? What did you say?"



ELEANOR DAYTON

"I told Carroll you were in love with Eleanor."

"The deuce! What did you want to say that for?"

"I didn't want to. It just said itself. I didn't have anything to do with it."

"Don't say it again."

"But you know, Tom, you are."

"Fiddlesticks!" snapped the man. "Promise not to say it again."

"I'll try not," said Olivia. "But suppose I forget?"

"You can keep from forgetting, you little rogue, if you want to," he replied.

"I'll try my best—'pon honour I will. And I say, Tom, I hope you'll get her."

"Olivia," said Tom, laughing, "you need a gallop; come."

They dashed out of the string, and Olivia put her pony at his best pace. Tom made his great bay keep level. They passed the others, couple after couple, passed Eleanor and Carroll who had the lead, and disappeared around a turn of the road.

"How that child rides," said Carroll, "and Mr. Wilmot knows how to handle a horse."

"Don't you think he is handsome?" said Eleanor, slyly.

"Very," said Carroll, who would not have run down a rival for worlds.

ELEANOR DAYTON

"He's a great athlete, and he's clever also," continued Eleanor. "And he has a splendid voice. He plays as well as sings."

"Oh," said Carroll, who neither played nor sang—except as men sing in chorus on summer nights or at college—and who had never asked himself: "Am I clever?"

"I envy him," added Carroll.

"Oh, you needn't," said Eleanor, gayly. "You two are so different, you couldn't possibly come into competition with each other."

Carroll did not answer. He was saying to himself: "Not come into competition! I don't know about that."

Tom and Olivia were the first of the riders to reach the farm. They were met by old Enfield, who strode out in horseman's boots, and plucked Olivia from the saddle. He had ridden from town early in the day. Miss Eliza and a married niece had driven to the farm before noon. A waggon load of clothes, collected the night before from the various people who were coming, had already been bestowed in cupboards among the different lofts.

"We're all ship-shape," said the old man. "Aunt Eliza has been killing chickens the whole afternoon."

"Broiled chicken for supper," cried Olivia. "And I may have some Catawba—mayn't I?"



ELEANOR DAYTON

"Everybody has Catawba on the farm," said her grandfather. "But you can't have much. It isn't like Tom and me."

But the girl was gone into the house to find her aunt.

"Are you thirsty, Tom? Will you walk down to the wine-house and take a drink in the cool?"

The southerly faces of the Dayton hills were terraced into vineyards, as were hundreds of Ohio hills fifty years ago, where grew that fine Catawba grape, which has since disappeared from the land.

The wine-house of the farm was built into the side of a hill so that it was really a cave walled and vaulted. A cold spring had determined its location. The water of this spring filled a hogshead, sunk into the floor, and flowed out in a gurgling stream through a grated opening in the foundation of the front wall. Between the cold water beneath and the mass of the earth above, the wine-house was cool in the hottest day. Here, in casks and barrels, was stored the vintage of the hills; that bright golden wine which Longfellow made his theme in the lines:

"For richest and best
Is the wine of the West,
That grows by the Beautiful River;
Whose sweet perfume
Fills all the room
With a benison on the giver."

ELEANOR DAYTON

Tom took the horses to the stables and then he and Mr. Dayton walked down to the wine-house. A cask with a tap in it stood upon a rack in the cool.

"Fill a tumbler, Tom," said Mr. Dayton; "I've been drinking it all day. That's a good barrel. It's the oldest here."

When they returned to the house the others had arrived. The girls were in the lofts, changing their dress; their voices could be heard overhead; the men were returning from the stables; supper was almost ready; there was laughter and commotion generally. Presently, the girls came down, transformed again into a flock of butterflies in bright dresses, laughing and chattering in the task of getting their hoops down the narrow stairs. Before long it was supper time.

Supper at the farm was a meal for out-of-doors. There was chicken broiled over wood embers; there were great platters of tomatoes, done in the same way; there was corn-bread hot from the fire; pyramids of golden Alderney butter; brown jugs full of Alderney milk and cream—cream that would hardly pour, it was so thick—and tea and coffee made by Miss Eliza herself; also, for all who wanted it, Catawba, brought fresh from the wine-house, and shining through tall glass pitchers with the colour of sunlight.



ELEANOR DAYTON

Everybody was in high glee; everybody had a great appetite, and ate and laughed and prattled; everybody was attentive to everybody else. Eleanor noticed, without showing that she noticed, how punctiliously polite to each other were Tom and Carroll. She laughed to herself because each man unconsciously took on something of the manner of the other. Tom laughed continually and was watchful of everybody's needs. Carroll was as near sedate as his joyous spirits would permit. And each was so particular to attend upon the other. It was "Mr. Wilmot, let me give you these tomatoes." Or, Tom would stretch his great arm across the table, saying: "Mr. Dayton, let me fill your glass."

Supper over, with the sunset burning red upon the one hand, the three-quarter moon shining white upon the other, there was a time when every one turned in and helped clear up the tables, and after that an hour of aimlessness. The plan was to rest this night; spend the morrow in riding, fishing, lounging; have the dance the next night; and ride back to town the following morning.

For awhile, after supper, they idled about; fell into groups and strolled here and there, the men smoking; and then, as the last of the sunset faded out and the full flood of moonlight filled the woods, they congregated gradually in the porch. They sat

ELEANOR DAYTON

in big old-fashioned wicker rocking-chairs, or reclined in hammocks, while still the men smoked, and without, through the rustling wall of the vines, they saw the dreaming moonlit earth, hills, woods, fields, valleys, the far-off river, swimming deep in silver light.

Presently, they got to singing: old-time college songs, unknown, or all but unknown, to the pert undergraduate of to-day, along with classics—"Fair Harvard," and such—that can never die; sentimental songs peculiar to the mid-century; sweet and tender ditties, all melody, and with nothing of what the modern calls "snap"; and along with these, ringing ballads full of actual struggle—not the maudlin "Days-of-old-when-knights-were-bold" kind of thing—which a later taste thinks too grim. From "Vive la, vive la, vive l'amour, Vive la Compagnie!" they passed into such forgotten things as "Rise up, rise up, Serepha, lay your golden cushion down;" and then, after lapsing with "The harp that once through Tara's halls," they swung into the rhythm of "Bonnie Dundee," which was followed by a general demand for Tom Wilmot and "Under the Sounding Rafter."

I wonder if anybody sings "Under the Sounding Rafter" to-day? But it fitted exactly the deepest mood of those people. It had precisely that mixture



ELEANOR DAYTON

of sentiment and heroism, of dash, effect, and a touch of the spectacular, which went so deep in those times. It was Tom Wilmot's favourite song. His singing of it is still a tradition. And then, there was the story of it, how it was written on the spot, by one of that fated garrison, in India, those English soldiers shut off from the hope of aid and waiting to die, man by man, of the cholera. To these Cincinnatians it had a special meaning, for almost every one here could remember when their own city lay stricken with plague. Tom did the song as a bass solo, and many a time people shut their eyes and shuddered at their own recollections as he boomed out the opening lines:

"Under the sounding rafter,
The walls around are bare,
As they peal to our shouts of laughter
It seems the dead are there."

And then the swing in the chorus:

"So stand to your glasses steady,
No tear shall quiver in eyes,
One cup to the dead already
And one to the next who dies."

On this night, by one of these unvoiced general consents that we often feel, Tom's song made an

ELEANOR DAYTON

end of the singing. After a little pause, talk was resumed, and soon afterward some one suggested a stroll in the moonlight.

Tom was taken up at the moment with some one else, and again it was Carroll who was next to Eleanor. As they wandered out, through the perfumed grove of beeches, out into the open of a meadow, where the moonlight came full upon their faces, they paused involuntarily.

"How bright it is!" said Eleanor.

The dazzling white moonshine on the spears of the dewy grass seemed almost like hoar-frost, except that it was somehow so eloquent of the warmth of the night. In some way, it made rich and companionable that warmth, taking from it all trace of oppression and giving to it something brightly stimulating. It placed one in an island of mellow light, but girdled it closely with an horizon of dim silver. In the same way it set one's thoughts in an island of near objects, making all of them intimate to oneself, yet remote from all the world.

Eleanor turned and looked at Carroll. For the moment he appeared to have forgotten her. He was standing bare-headed, gazing forth across the twinkling meadow, down the vale that was beyond it, where the moonshine was like a lake, and away beyond that along miles and miles of river bottom,



ELEANOR DAYTON

flat corn-land like fretted silver. His face glowed. He was lost in the beauty of the night.

As the girl looked at him she took her breath, suddenly, and something stirred within her. Eleanor's first impulse was to turn back to the house. But her pride rose up and forbade retreat.

"It is nothing," she said to herself, "unless, perhaps, the moonlight. He harmonizes with the night. How beautiful they both are!"

But she was still looking at him when Carroll came to himself—drawn back to it, perhaps, by that still gaze—and their eyes met. The next instant she wore her usual expression; but he had caught a look from her eyes in which there was no laughter. It made him start. He was still so much of a boy that he blushed—he scarce knew why.

Eleanor was entirely in hand again. "I want to thank you, Cousin Carroll," she said, "for that picture of my mother."

Carroll blushed through a declaration that she was under no obligation. He was never an adept at such speeches.

"But isn't it a glorious night," said he, "and what a lovely place this is!"

"It makes me think sometimes," said Eleanor, "that I care too much for mere beauty. I want all

ELEANOR DAYTON

life to be like this. I don't want any ugliness anywhere."

"Why should there be?" said Carroll.

Eleanor laughed.

"One might grow ugly oneself," said she.

"You won't," said Carroll with emphasis.

"I don't know. I look like Mary Carroll. You know how she ended."

"I say," cried the youth, "you haven't really got that horrid late picture of her, side by side with the lovely early one, have you?"

Eleanor nodded.

"Mother told me about it, but I declare it's a sin. I don't see what your aunt was thinking about. It's the death's head at the feast."

"Exactly that," said Eleanor.

"But what's the sense of it?"

"To keep me from getting proud."

"Oh, bother!"

"Not a bit of it. Suppose I had been thrown from my horse this afternoon and struck a picket fence and put an eye out, and got a great scar all over one cheek, who'd dangle about me then?"

Carroll's heart jumped. He saw the vision, saw the maimed face, a sudden horrid discord in the midst of the exquisite night. To go through life side by side with that! Could a man

ELEANOR DAYTON

do it? Something stirred bravely in the lad's heart.

"Eleanor," said he, "I would."

But the moment when Eleanor might have listened had gone by.

"No, you wouldn't," said she, laughing. "You only think you would. No man would."

Carroll's heart jumped back into its shell.

"El-ean-or! El-ean-or!" came a voice across the fields.

"Come, they are calling us. Let's go back. They want us for the Virginia reel."

That rollicking country dance was always the end of the evening at the farm.

"Who are you dancing with, Carroll?" asked Eleanor as they neared the porch. To herself she said: "I'm giving him a chance to be absolutely the gentleman. Will he take it?"

"Why-er——" said Carroll, "I think I'll ask your aunt."

"Good!" said Eleanor to herself. But aloud she continued: "So I'm not popular any more."

I have said that Carroll was not an adept at speeches. But he did something better. He broke out with his ringing boyish laugh that said plainly: "Come now, I see through that." Eleanor laughed also. But it was not her way to let men off.

ELEANOR DAYTON

"I feel hurt," said she as they came into the porch.

"No you don't," said he, and walked away toward her aunt.

"I think a great deal of you, Carroll Dayton," said Eleanor to herself. Then she crossed the porch to Tom and said: "Will you dance with me to-night?"

The double row of the dancers went from Tom and Eleanor, at one end, to Enfield Dayton and Olivia at the other. There were no lights in the porch except the silvery iridescence of the moonshine sifted through the green leaves. This was more like a spirit of light, than light itself. But it turned the dusk into faintly shining ether and the men and women into softened unearthly figures, the colours of whose garments were just perceptible and no more.

"Upon my word," said Eleanor, "we might be a dance of ghosts."

Tom lifted up his voice and boomed out:

"Under the sounding rafter,
The walls around are bare,
As they peal to our shouts of laughter
It seems the dead are there."

"Oh, Tom—stop!" cried half a dozen who had heard Eleanor's remark.

"Lead off, uncle," called Eleanor.

ELEANOR DAYTON

"Silence, Tom. Attention every one. Now——"

And then old Enfield, who had danced the Virginia reel for upwards of sixty years, took command, putting them through a host of unusual figures and doing it all with the heartiness of a boy.

When it was over, there was a general movement toward the lofts. Only Tom Wilmot said he was not sleepy and would go for a ramble.

Eleanor's bent for privacy was so strong that even at the farm, where nobody else would have thought of sleeping alone, she had contrived a cubby-hole of a separate room with a small square window, looking out upon the woods. On many a moonlit night she had lain upon the floor, her head on that window-sill, feasting on a beauty that was perfect of its kind. To-night, she blew out her candle and dropped noiselessly to the floor.

She laid her head upon the sill, breathed deep of the richness of the night and let her eyes revel in it.

"Oh," she murmured, "to be like this oneself. To be in harmony with it forever. Never to change, never to grow old, just to be beautiful, beautiful always."

She lay dreaming and into her dreams came the figure of Carroll. Was he not the incarnation of what so charmed her in this night? She had read of beauty like his, but never before had she seen it.

ELEANOR DAYTON

It had often seemed to her that on nights like this, could she only strain her vision a little farther, she must see Apollo, walking slowly among the trees, like a stately moon-beam. Had she not seen Apollo that night? The beauty of outward form, that beauty which is the joy of the earth made human—surely, she had seen it this very night.

Across the fields and through the woods, low and distant, yet resonant, boomed a great bass tone. Eleanor started out of her dreams. She sat up and swept her glance around the horizon almost angrily. What had put it into Tom's head, there in the softly silver night, far away on the other side of the wood, to be singing so splendidly: "Under the sounding rafters."

The sound of it came to Eleanor like a challenge. She was conscious of a strange emotion, half dread, half defiance. It was not the music, for Eleanor was not especially musical, but the image that arose out of the moonlight and seemed to menace the image of Carroll. The song was but a spell which obtruded on her the singer—that darkly powerful face, that commanding frame, that presence which no one would call beautiful, which some people refused even to call handsome; but by which every one was held and impressed. How much sterner it was, how much more fateful, than Apollo! And with what a

ELEANOR DAYTON

sense of being thrown suddenly on the defensive, as if she had sprung between an idol and the destroyer, Eleanor realized that fact. Through the serene deliciousness of the moonlight, this alien image, ignoring her sense of beauty, approached her and she repelled it, and yet, by some inward sense which she could not name, it thrilled her and held her fast.

"Tom Wilmot," she cried, "I believe I hate you."

Still, across that delicate fairy-land of the moonshine, boomed out of the distance, the great bass tones. He was singing a stanza toward the end of the song:

"Who dreads to the dust returning :
Who shrinks from the sable shore
Where the high and haughty yearning
Of the soul shall sting no more.
Then stand to your glasses steady,
The world is a world of lies.
One cup to the dead already
And one to the next who dies."

CHAPTER XII

THAT WHICH WASTETH AT NOONDAY

EVEN at the farm there was never any interruption in the order of morning prayers.

Soon after breakfast next morning the entire company assembled on the porch and Mr. Dayton opened the Bible. Afterward, people noted the fatality in his choice of scripture. Why he chose the ninety-first psalm he could never explain. All he knew was that he had an impulse to take it and he did so. Explain it as chance, or premonition, or what you will. But in the light of what happened that day, there was a strange premonitory appropriateness in the words: "Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor the arrow that flieth by day; nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor the destruction that wasteth at noonday."

During the forenoon the house was given up to the women, and the men wandered forth to amuse themselves as they might. Tom Wilmot, who was almost as free at the Dayton farm as in his own house, kept there a brace of guns. His elaborate politeness to Carroll saw an opportunity.



ELEANOR DAYTON

"Mr. Dayton," said he, "I know this country pretty well, and I've a decent gun that is at your disposal. We might go for a tramp, if you like, and perhaps we'll find something to pop at."

Carroll was not to be outdone in the game of politeness to rivals, of refusing to see significance in the other man. He declared he should be delighted. Presently they set out, with a couple of dogs and each with a gun upon his shoulder.

"If we don't come back till night," said Tom, "don't mind us. We'll get dinner at a farm-house somewhere."

And away they went through the gleaming August sunshine, two splendid figures of youth, so strangely dissimilar, and yet in one respect alike: each was the best of his type.

It was toward noon that their adventure befell them. They had turned back toward the farm and had been walking for some time through a heavy wood. Coming out into an open they saw sky for the first time in half an hour.

"Look!" cried Tom. "We are in for it?"

A midsummer thunder-storm was close upon them.

"What do you say?" continued Tom. "Shall we keep on and stick it out, or go back to that empty cabin we passed a while ago?"

"Just as you wish," said Carroll.

ELEANOR DAYTON

Tom looked again at the sky and hesitated. In that moment a feeble voice came to them in a low moan, from beyond a bush. It went through them like an electric shock—it was so utterly wretched.

By one impulse they ran to the place. A child, a girl of about ten, lay upon an old blanket, rolling from side to side, delirious. Her dress betrayed her as a gipsy. But she was daintily made and her features were fine. Both men recognised her. Just before supper, the night before, a family of gipsies had stopped at the farm. This child had been with them. She was ailing and fretful with a flushed face that went well with her beautiful black hair. Her beauty was so noticeable that almost every one had gone to her, spoken to her, tried to soothe her. But this solicitude had defeated its purpose. The brute who called himself her father, seemed to grow suspicious. He ordered his wife to bundle up her things, refused to wait for the meal that was promised them, refused to remain and tell fortunes, and drove his family through the wood as if he were driving sheep. In the night, apparently, some disease had developed which the older gipsies feared to face. Here, by the ashes of their fire they had left the child, very likely to die.

For a moment the men stood silent.



ELEANOR DAYTON

"That settles it," said Tom. "We must take her to the cabin. She'll be drenched otherwise."

He stepped toward her.

"What an eruption on her face!" he exclaimed.

"Don't you know what it is?" said Carroll.

"No."

"Man, it's small-pox."

Tom drew back shuddering.

"Good God!" said he.

Carroll had been lost in his sympathies. He had not offered to act, for Tom had taken the lead in everything all the morning. Carroll had forgotten for the moment, that the initiative might be his as well as another's. Not in the least forth-putting by nature, he was always willing to let the other man lead until an issue was developed. Then he flashed out and was ready to fight. On this occasion he mistook Tom's shudder.

"You aren't afraid, are you?" he cried.

Tom glanced at him and his cheek burned slowly.

"Afraid!" he exclaimed. "You fool!"

Carroll had stepped toward the child. Tom caught him by the shoulder and pulled him back. He took her up in his arms, turned about and without a word started back the way they had come.

For ten minutes they trudged in silence. Then Carroll touched his arm.

ELEANOR DAYTON

"Look here, Wilmot, I was an ass a moment ago. But you'll be a bigger one if you don't forget it. We'll not get there before the rain, if we don't make better time. I'm fresh still. Let me have a turn."

Tom looked across his shoulder into Carroll's eyes. No man who was right himself could have met that frankly manful gaze and continued his resentment.

"Take her, Dayton," said Tom, holding out the child.

They were barely within the cabin when the storm broke. It came as Ohio storms can come in August when they do their worst. Water walked across the hills in walls. The horizon shrank to a radius of a few hundred yards.

But in five minutes it was over. The cabin roof was staunch and the two men and their charge were dry.

"First of all, Dayton, I want to beg your pardon and shake hands," said Tom. "We are in for the deuce knows what, and let's get some good out of it."

"I am wholly to blame," said Carroll, as he shook Tom's hand. "I acted like a school-boy."

"Now that's settled," said Tom. "What are we going to do?"

"We can't go back to the house," said Carroll, "and we must get word to a physician. Have you been vaccinated recently?"



ELEANOR DAYTON

"Never in my life," said Tom.

"I was, long ago," said Carroll. "It broke out on our plantation. I remember the odour. That's how I knew."

Tom was sitting on a bench against a wall, his legs stretched out, one upon the other, his hands in his pockets.

"I don't seem to have a flow of ideas just at present," said he.

"Nor I," said Carroll. "But we must do something and do it quick."

"You are right," cried Tom, springing up. "Now listen. Will you stay here and watch the child?"

Carroll nodded.

"Well," said Tom, "there's a village and a country doctor about two miles from here. I'll post down there; bring him back, if I have to carry him; send one man with a message to Mr. Dayton and another to town with a message to our doctor—he's Mr. Dayton's too—to hurry out to the farm and vaccinate them all. Do you agree?"

Carroll held out his hand.

"Hurry, old man," said he.

Tom shook hands with a hearty goodwill, and in another moment Carroll was alone, in the deserted cabin, in a country he did not know, with the plague-stricken child.



CHAPTER XIII

UNDER THE SHADOW

“**E**LIZA,” said Enfield Dayton, about the middle of the afternoon, “won’t you step down to the vineyard with me.”

“Certainly, Enfield.”

As soon as they were out of sight of the house, the old man halted.

“Eliza,” said he, “I have dreadful news. That messenger just now brought me this note.”

He handed it to her. It was from Tom and had been sent in by the doctor from Wolsey village. Miss Eliza read it and then she and her brother looked at each other a moment in silence.

“We have a serious task before us, Enfield,” said she.

He took off his hat and mopped his brow with a great silk handkerchief.

“How hot it is!” said he.

“Do you suppose Dr. Judson”—their own doctor—“can be here to-day?”

“Heaven grant it!” exclaimed her brother.

“But what do you think?” said Miss Eliza, a trifle sharply.



ELEANOR DAYTON

"I think he will. It's a case that makes demands. Here are thirty people who should be vaccinated at once."

"I trust he has the virus," said Miss Eliza. "But the great thing, Enfield, is to keep the girls out of hysterics. It will take our strength to do it."

"We need not tell them, I think, all the facts. It is a case that justifies suppression."

"I am not going to tell any lies," said Miss Eliza, adding: "Nobody with wits ever needs to in this world. If the doctor does not come to-night, we'll say nothing. If he does, we'll come out with all the facts. There's a battle before us, but we might as well have it out and be done. We must quarantine ourselves, and stay here till there is no risk of carrying back the infection, and that is all there is about it. We must bring the girls round. And we'll have the dance to-night as if nothing had happened."

"Eliza," said her brother, "you are a jewel."

"Enfield," said she, almost peevishly, "you know too many words."

The old man laughed and put on the hat with which he had been fanning himself. He had forgotten about the heat.

"I suppose," said he, as they walked back to the house, "that I ought not to go out and hunt up those boys."

ELEANOR DAYTON

"Of course not. Poor fellows, I wish we might! But our place just now is here. I am going to tell Eleanor at once, and also Olivia."

"Olivia!" exclaimed Olivia's grandfather.

Miss Eliza nodded.

"I never should have thought of it," said Mr. Dayton.

"You men forget your childhood so quickly," was Miss Eliza's retort.

She took the two girls aside and told them, in her matter-of-fact way, exactly what had happened. Eleanor gave a start, paled an instant, bit her lips, and that was all. Thereafter she was as self-possessed as her aunt. Olivia opened wide her eyes and her lips parted. "And then," said Miss Eliza, telling of it, "I think she grew actually taller by at least a half inch. She drew herself up and said to me, with such an air: 'You may rely on me, Aunt Eliza; I won't get hysterical.'"

To Miss Eliza's great relief—for she longed to have the battle over—the doctor came that day. Just before supper time there was a sound of hoofs and wheels. Miss Eliza and Mr. Dayton hurried down the drive and old Dr. Judson pulled up his horse, saying: "Well, well, Dayton, but you have done it now."

"Have you virus, doctor?" cried Miss Eliza.



ELEANOR DAYTON

"That I have, enough for an army—praise God! I'll give it to you strong."

The doctor came into the porch, with his thumbs in the pocket of his waistcoat, his fingers beating a rat-tat on his stomach—it was a trick he had—and about his mouth and eyes deep creases of amusement.

"Well, young ladies and gentlemen, you are in for it."

"In for what, doctor?" said Eleanor, in her blandest tone.

Rat-tat went the doctor's fingers. The creases deepened around his mouth. Then he laughed.

"Your mammas are all alarmed about their little dears. So they sent me out to look at you. Stand up in a line there."

They obeyed.

"Now stick your tongues out. No giggling. This isn't funny. If you saw yourselves as ithers see ye, you wouldn't think so."

But they giggled just the same. They knew the doctor's ways. Most of them had stuck their tongues out and been prescribed for across a fence before now.

The doctor had shifted his thumbs from the pockets to his armholes and was rat-tatting on his big bony old chest.

ELEANOR DAYTON

"Horrible!" said he. "Horrible! There isn't a healthy one in the lot." Then, with a sudden change of manner, he continued: "Now, children, we'll drop nonsense. There's an epidemic of small-pox in town, and I have come out to vaccinate you all. Girls in that room. Boys in that. I'll take the girls first."

There were sudden exclamations—a quick flutter going through them all like a ripple over water—a sob or two—and one girl, lovely Sally Carter, cried out: "Oh, doctor!"

"Oh, Sally, get into that room quick!" roared the old physician, while his eyes twinkled. There was never anything, not even his own sufferings in a terrible disease, that suppressed the twinkle in those eyes.

"Come, Sally," said Miss Eliza. "Come, girls."

Little Olivia skipped up to Sally and linked an arm in hers.

"You're afraid," said she, gayly. "I'd be ashamed."

"Yes, I am afraid. And you would be too, if you were old enough to understand things."

"Afraid of what, Sally?" asked Eleanor, who had a colour like a rose and never looked more beautiful in her life.

"Oh, Eleanor Dayton, you always were as cold as a stone!" cried Sally.



ELEANOR DAYTON

"Get along, Sally, get along," said Dr. Judson, behind her. "I'm going to do you first, and if you whimper, I'll——"

"Oh, doctor, I won't go first."

"Begin with me, doctor," piped Olivia. "I'm not hysterical, the way Sally is."

"You little fool!" exclaimed Sally, who was supposed to be amiable.

"This will do, Sally," said Miss Eliza. "Now girls, all of you sit down and the doctor will get through with you very soon."

Most of the girls were stronger than Sally Carter—though no one except Eleanor was so lovely in the face, and even Eleanor had not Sally's perfection of outline—and they responded to the silent appeal of those three strong wills, the doctor's, Miss Eliza's, and Eleanor's. Also, Olivia's self-importance and her childish unconcern made them laugh and relieved the tension. Presently it was over and the doctor had left the room. Miss Eliza was standing by the fire-place and looking about her from face to face, as if making a final review.

"Eleanor," said she, "lock the door."

The girls, by a sudden separative impulse, the same that makes a crowd fly apart when you cry "Stop thief!" drew away from each other and ceased to be a mass. Miss Eliza had had a fortunate inspi-

ELEANOR DAYTON

ration. The general in her perceived her advantage and at once attacked.

"My dears," said she, "the situation is not what the doctor described. Something very strange has happened. It will try your courage. But you are all ladies, and you will act like women of honour, who have birth and breeding behind you—not like nursery maids."

She paused a moment and again looked from eye to eye. Most of the girls had changed colour, but, except for Sally Carter, Miss Eliza was not alarmed. With Sally, it might be necessary to take extreme measures. She proceeded:

"Tom Wilmot and Carroll Dayton found in the woods this morning that beautiful little gipsy girl who was here last night. You remember how lovely she was and how brutal her father was. The poor child is being cared for now by the two men, at a deserted cabin, and she has the smallpox."

"Oh, Miss Eliza!" screamed Sally Carter. The girl had sprung to her feet; her eyes were staring; she was white as death.

But Miss Eliza had made up her mind what to do. It was no time to be squeamish. She stepped quickly across the room and struck Sally a box on the ear. It was such a ringing slap that it was heard in the other room where the men were, and led the

ELEANOR DAYTON

doctor to mutter to himself: "Hope that girl is getting her deserts."

"Sit down my dear," said Miss Eliza in her usual voice. "Olivia, give Sally a glass of water."

Olivia sprang to her with the water. Sally had flushed scarlet and collapsed into a chair.

"Drink it, Sally—drink the whole tumblerful."

The girl obeyed, while the room was so still you could hear her swallow; hear faint nervous sounds of the throat muscles.

"Now, my dears," said Miss Eliza, "there must be absolutely nothing of this sort again. We will have our dance to-night exactly as if nothing had happened. We will all stay here until there is no risk of carrying contagion to our families. I rely upon you all not to disgrace your names. Now come out with me and show that you are women—not babies—before the men."

"What did you do to her," said Dr. Judson, a few moments later? "You've nipped it right in the bud. The rest are as docile as lambs. Keep your hold through to-night and the thing is done."

Miss Eliza described the scene. He rubbed his palms, chuckling:

"Trust a woman, ma'am, at a crisis," said he, with a bow. "If your sex could keep it up on a steady pull, there'd be no occupation for mine."

ELEANOR DAYTON

"I've ceased to make courtesies over pretty speeches, doctor," said Miss Eliza, smiling.

"You had chance enough, once, ma'am," said the doctor.

"Let the dead bury the dead," said Miss Eliza. With a sudden flash of tremulousness, which no one would have dreamed of a moment before, she added: "Please get me a glass of wine—there is some on the sideboard."

"Gad!" exclaimed Dr. Judson, as he strode for the dining-room and seized a pitcher of Catawba. "What a spirit that woman has—and a half-sized wind could blow her away!"

She waited a moment after swallowing the wine and then she flushed slightly.

"I believe I am not so much better than Sally, after all."

"Why, bless my soul, Miss Eliza, don't you know that you divided yourself by twelve while you were in that room and gave eleven parts away? Every bit of stamina those girls have you put into 'em."

"No, no, doctor. Eleanor, at least, didn't need any."

"Don't you deceive yourself," said he. "She's putting up a brave fight, but I haven't been at this sort of thing fifty years for nothing. But now I must be off and see to those boys."

ELEANOR DAYTON

"You know the way, doctor?"

"No, but I have directions. Tom will meet me at the place where the road eastward from here crosses the second creek. Here I go."

Mr. Dayton came up from the stable, just then, with a fresh horse in the doctor's trap.

"I'll drive a little way with you, Judson," said he.

"Good idea," said the doctor. "It won't hurt that boy to have you speak to him across the creek. But you must be back inside an hour and help your sister shoo these geese through the night. Good-bye, ma'am. Keep your hold on 'em."

When they were gone Miss Eliza drank another glass of wine and sat a moment in silence. From the other end of the porch came the sound of laughter. Looking that way, she saw Eleanor at the centre of the company. She was flushed and sparkling. Olivia was lying at her feet with her head against Eleanor's knee. Plainly a game of wits was going on between Eleanor and one of the men. The rest were playing chorus.

"There is no danger just now," thought Miss Eliza; "I'll rest."

She leaned back in her chair and closed her eyes. The doctor had scarcely exaggerated when he said that she had divided herself by twelve. It seemed to her as if but a small portion of herself remained.

ELEANOR DAYTON

She sat quiet for some time. Then she opened her eyes, and there was a strange dreamy look in them, as if she had seen things not of earth. It vanished as her gaze met the objects that recalled her to every day. She got up, went over and joined the others.

Presently she found herself wondering what the doctor could have meant by his comment on Eleanor. The girl was in such a flow of spirits. Her colour was high. She talked, she laughed, she bantered them one after another. Ordinarily she was not especially given to talk, but to-night she kept the party chattering.

"My dear," said Miss Eliza, as soon as she got the chance, "is all well with you?"

"Yes, aunty—yes."

Miss Eliza searched her eyes.

"It isn't either of the men, is it, dear?"

"Oh, no, no, no. But I must be back to the others and keep them going."

"I was not prepared for this," thought Miss Eliza, sadly. "But of course it had to come—if it is real, that is. But she's the sort that will take it hard." A wistful shadow passed quickly over her eyes.

"At least, she is brave about it," said the little old lady to herself.

Yes, Eleanor was brave. And her trouble was a

ELEANOR DAYTON

more complex thing than her aunt suspected. Eleanor fled from it all that night, and for nights and days thereafter, like a desperate soul pursued. It drove her headlong from her usual reserve. To escape it she plunged so deep into gayety that people thought she was callous. For what pursued her was not merely a fear, nor even a grief. It was certainly the former, perhaps the latter, but above all it was a great, sudden, overmastering shame of herself. Upon her eye-balls burned relentless the face of Carroll Dayton, scarred all over with pock-marks, the beauty of it ruined. What Eleanor fled from was ashamed consciousness that now the face repelled her.

"And how I should despise a man," she thought, "if he changed that way towards me."

CHAPTER XIV

MRS. DAYTON FORESEES THINGS

RAIN was sluicing upon the roofs of the great house at Dayton. Seen across the lawn, it was a massive blur of pink stucco dimmed almost into ashes of roses. Water spouted from its eaves. The Doric columns stepped their feet in a running stream that poured down the steps into the sweep of the drive like a cataract.

From within doors the view was still less lively. No house was to be seen in any direction. And even through the shroud of the rain, despite the monotonous volleying on the roof, the sight of a house would have comforted the eye a little. It would have been some contrast to the stretch of sodden lawn; the meadows that were gradually disappearing under water; the distant corn-fields where the stalks were tossed this way and that; the tree-tops mounding and rolling beneath the wind like the waves at sea.

Mrs. Dayton in her boudoir above stairs felt as desolate as was the prospect from her window. In her hand was a letter from Enfield Dayton explaining the situation at Cincinnati.

ELEANOR DAYTON

"Those horrid Daytons!" she exclaimed; "Robert has all the good that is in them. Oh, why did I let Carroll go!"

She was not crying—as yet. She sat at her dressing-table, white-faced, with lips that felt dry enough to crack. The tears would come later, when her husband returned and took her up in his arms, and she could lay her head on his shoulder. She looked again at the letter:

"Neither of the boys has so far developed the disease, and everything has been done to insure their safety. Beside the cabin where they sought refuge, I have caused to be erected a great tent. The situation is high and salubrious. The best medical advice assures me that no better hospital could be found. Two nurses are with them, nuns from the famous hospital of the Good Samaritan—the elder, the Sister Constantia, being a very capable woman, practically a physician who served through a great epidemic of small-pox in France—and also two men-servants. Every appliance for their comfort has been sent out from town. Dr. Judson is strongly in hopes that neither will take the disease, but if they do you may rest assured that they could not be better cared for."

"Oh, you are so tedious," cried Mrs. Dayton; "why do you keep saying 'they'? I know Carroll

ELEANOR DAYTON

will take it. And he'll come out pock-marked and ugly—oh——”

She flung up her arms and twisted in her chair with a moan of physical pain.

“My poor darling! It will be so different for you with your beauty gone.”

She looked through a window and turned from it with a shudder.

“If that rain would only stop. It sets me wild.”

Again she read the letter from beginning to end. Then she rang for her maid.

“Pack my trunks and have Mr. Dayton's packed; we are going to Cincinnati to-night.”

She went downstairs and told one of the house servants to fetch the coachman.

“Scipio,” said she to the great negro, who grinned subservience, “Mr. Carroll is sick in Cincinnati. We are going to him just as soon as your master returns. Have the big carriage ready and four horses. Have them hitched and standing. You understand, now? If you keep me waiting a minute, I'll have your hide flogged off.”

The threat was only her way of speaking. She had never had any one flogged. Scipio's grin widened as he promised obedience.

“Now, you, Alexandria,” she commanded to the cook, “put up a dinner for your master—have it



ELEANOR DAYTON

piping hot. He'll be back about eleven and we'll start the minute he gets here."

When Robert Dayton, that hard rider, on his great sorrel mare, came pounding and clattering through the rain, and into the carriage porch of his house, the horses stood in harness, Scipio was on the box, the trunks were strapped up behind, and within the carriage sat his wife.

"Robert, Robert," she called, putting her head through the window, "Carroll has small-pox in Cincinnati. I've got your dinner here.—Alexandria, bring that dinner basket this minute."

"What—what—what's that, Mary?" he cried, aghast.

"Oh, never mind what. Here's the basket. Just drop that rain-coat and come along."

"What did you say about Carroll?"

"He's sick, Bob. Hurry!"

Robert Dayton threw off his dripping rain-coat and put his foot on the step of the carriage.

"Make 'em go, Scipio," said he.

"Do my best, Mass' Robert."

Mr. Dayton stepped inside and a negro boy slammed the door. Another let go the heads of the leaders; Scipio cracked his whip, the horses plunged, the carriage creaked, and then away they went and were sheeted up in rain.

ELEANOR DAYTON

Robert Dayton put his arm about his wife, lifted her up and settled her on his knee.

"Now tell me, honey?" said he.

She drooped upon his shoulder and began to sob.

"Oh, Bob, he'll be so ugly, and it'll spoil all his chances."

The bluff man, her husband, laughed. He kissed her forehead, saying: "How do you know all this?" He was in the habit of allowing for her exaggerations.

"They sent a boy over from the railroad with this letter. It came just after breakfast."

He read the letter, his left arm about his wife, and she with her head upon his shoulder. His face turned grave. He had hoped she exaggerated far more than she did. He stooped again and kissed her.

"Don't get scared, Molly. He hasn't it yet. There's a great big chance on his side."

"Why did I let him go?" she cried. "I detest those people, Bob; I never did like your family."

He forced himself to be gay.

"Then why did you marry into it?" said he, pinching her cheek.

"Because I couldn't help myself. But I do wish you'd been somebody else."

"No rose without its thorn, sweetheart," said her

ELEANOR DAYTON

husband. "But don't worry about Carroll. He'll pull through."

"Oh, he won't die," said his mother. "He sha'n't die. He's too strong. But I know he'll be pock-marked."

"Well, what if he is?" said the man.

"Robert Dayton, have you any sense?" said the woman.

She lifted her head and her eyes snapped.

"A little—about horses and men and things," said he.

"Stupid!" said she, dropping back upon his shoulder.

"Say it of yourself, Molly—this one time. If Carroll pulls through, I don't care if he's pock-marked all over."

"That's a man for you!" exclaimed his wife. "Do you know what it will cost him?"

"I haven't reckoned," said Dayton.

"He'll never be President of the United States."

In spite of his sudden anxiety Robert Dayton laughed.

"Are looks a political force?" said he.

"Now listen, Robert. Carroll is cock of the walk all over Westerland County, isn't he?"

"Yes."

"And why?"

ELEANOR DAYTON

"Because he's the best man in it—of his years, that is."

"Oh, Robert! If you only were a woman! Do you think Carroll is the best horseman in the county?"

"I never saw his equal."

"That's just it. Nor did anybody else. But there are ten boys who are every bit as good horsemen, only they don't make the splendid appearance. It's his looks, Robert, that give Carroll the first place. He doesn't ride better, or shoot better, or dance better, or do anything better than the pick of the other fellows. But he looks so fine while he's doing it, that he gets credit for being the best. Everybody remembers him, everybody speaks of him, people invite him—all because of his looks. He's the flower of our region and that's why he could have gone up right straight to the top of politics."

It had been the intention of Carroll's parents that the boy should stand for Congress as soon as he was of age. Those were days when people still believed in youthful genius. Robert Dayton was himself no mean power in politics, and he had cousins who were men of might. His shrewd little wife was a host. One way and another, building always on the general assumption that he was the prize youth of the county,

ELEANOR DAYTON

the future had seemed assured. Such a youth, with such a start, with such relatives, might go far—who should say how far?

And was the corner-stone of all this Carroll's beauty? Robert Dayton drew his arm closer about his wife while he pondered her sayings and gradually perceived she was right. He was one of those deliberate, practical men who have small ability to see things for themselves, but can judge of the truth that is pointed out to them. The importance of Carroll's looks had never occurred to him before. His wife had never discussed it. But now she spoke of it, he perceived that the boy's pre-eminence was in spectacular effect. As a human spectacle he out-did everything else Westerland County had known—or, in fact, the State of Maryland. Minus his spectacular effect, he was no more than a dozen other youths, all of good family, good opportunities, and fair abilities. He might still fight his way to the top. To be escorted in a triumphal progress was no longer to be thought of. Robert Dayton began to meditate at once how the career of his son should be altered and adapted so as to meet this new condition, should it arise.

"He has brains, Molly," said he.

"So have twenty thousand others," she retorted.

Robert Dayton laughed.

ELEANOR DAYTON

"Poor little dear—you feel it a great deal more than he will. But cheer up. We'll pull him through. We've pulled through most things, haven't we?"

Mrs. Dayton moved her head into an easier position on his shoulder.

"You always had 'the faith for the two of us, Bob," said she.

"And you, my dear, had the wits."

Which was close to true.

CHAPTER XV

ENTER ROSALIE

THERE is a spot in the wood, quite a way to the east of the Dayton farm, where a waggon-track leaves the main road, crosses a little rustic bridge and goes north. The main road curves just there, and the other, which starts from the top of the curve, soon makes a bend of its own. Thus there are no vistas from this spot. What distinguishes it, is the peculiar brightness of the sunshine. Perhaps this is due to the clear yellow of the clay roads, girdled entirely, so far as the eye sees, by the green of the forest. Perhaps the conformation of the ground counts for something. It is an unusually sheltered spot, where the wind never comes until threatening a gale. But from one cause or another, it is, of all parts of that great wood, the one spot in which to know silent, dreamy, golden sunshine in all its beauty. Around it closes the still wood, tenantless, moveless, but seeming always more like a live thing gone to sleep than mere timber. Now and then bird-calls come out of the wood, as if the forest murmured in its sleep, but even these

ELEANOR DAYTON

are rare. In the main there is brooding silence impregnate with golden sun.

This spot for six weeks in the lives of Tom Wilmot and Carroll Dayton was the gate of the world. To that little rustic bridge were brought the supplies sent up from Wolsey village. In a box on the bridge were put the orders, which were taken out daily by a man from the village grocer. By a sort of instinct, this meeting-point of the roads was accepted by the occupants of the quarantined cabin as the limit of their rambles. "Now, remember," said Sister Constantia, playfully, shaking her finger at Tom and Carroll, who were going to walk with Sister Rosalie, "you are not to cross the bridge. It is thus far and no farther. Beyond that is the cowardly world. We scorn it."

"And yet, Lady Abbess," said Tom, who insisted on addressing Constantia in that way, "I have a suspicion that the Sister Rosalie might be tempted any minute to return to the world."

"And then what would happen?" asked Constantia, smiling.

"She would simply step across the bridge and disappear, like the fairies in the stories, and we'd never hear of her again."

"Do I look like a fairy?" said Rosalie, drawing herself up to full height. She was a tall and very

ELEANOR DAYTON

active woman who trod the wood like a Diana. "I eat too much for a fairy, Mr. Tom."

"It's the bridge that's the point, not the fairy," said Tom. "Promise not to cross it, Sister."

"I will if I want to."

Sister Constantia smiled.

"Sister Rosalie never does anything she doesn't want to, but she ceased long ago to want to do anything but be a sister to the afflicted."

"You may be sure I wouldn't do it if I didn't like it," said the younger woman. "Come, boys."

Sister Constantia watched the two splendid youths and the handsome nun until they passed from sight down the road. It was mid-afternoon and the sunshine through the beech-tops merely richened and made bright the air beneath. Both youths were most carefully groomed in the pink of afternoon dress. They had sent to town for their whole wardrobes. It was wise old Sister Constantia who had commanded punctiliousness in dress.

"Let us think of this as a house party," said she. "Imagine Sister Rosalie and I are two ladies of the world on whom you are dancing attendance. Don't you think that is better?"

The nuns had arrived at the cabin one day about half after three. Constantia examined the gipsy child, gave Rosalie directions, and then for perhaps

ELEANOR DAYTON

an hour sat in the pleasant shadow talking to the two youths. Constantia was plain, old, pock-marked, but with strange grey eyes much used to authority, and with the air of a great lady—which in fact, by birth, she was; Rosalie, twenty years younger, but still almost old enough to be Carroll's mother, though not quite, was tall, finely made, with hair prematurely grey, and violet eyes. She was extremely good-looking. Both the youths were greatly impressed by their "keepers," as Carroll called them.

"Margaret," said Constantia, calling Rosalie by her real name, when they were by themselves, "these are fine boys, very brave, and they'll respond to whatever tone you give them. But they are so young; they have had no sorrows; and mere life, for its own sake, is still so sweet to them. We shall win or lose this case in the next two weeks before the symptoms appear."

"I'll do my best, aunt."

For these two nuns were aunt and niece. Sister Constantia was once a great lady in France. Margaret was the child of her sister and an officer of the American legation. Both had found in the convent that escape from sorrow which it gives to so many Catholic women. Both had learned, as such women do, to keep their souls apart, as in a shrine, and to seem to be like others.

ELEANOR DAYTON

It was on that first afternoon that Constantia spoke her mind about dress.

"Now, young gentlemen," said she, smiling, her old grey eyes having a curiously calm and self-contained expression, "you understand that I rule here."

"The Lady Abbess," said Tom.

"That in authority, at least. Here is my first mandate. We will call you Mr. Tom and Mr. Carroll."

"Our ladies' grace," continued Tom, who had more literary flavour in his speech than Carroll.

"To a Catholic that is almost blasphemous," said Rosalie; "don't you talk that way, Mr. Carroll. But I know you didn't mean it," she added to Tom.

He blushed. Nun or no, Sister Rosalie was not the sort of woman one cared to be snubbed by—if any such exist. Constantia continued:

"My next mandate is about clothes. What have you here?"

They told her.

"You will send in, this very night, for all the clothes you have. You will dress as punctiliously as you know how. Because this poor child is dying, that is no reason why you men should slouch. Sister Rosalie is very critical upon dress. You must please her entirely."

ELEANOR DAYTON

The clothes came out the next day. Two great trunks were left at the bridge. Tom and Carroll with the two men-servants carried their contents in armfuls along the steep track, through the blazing August sunshine to the cabin, a quarter of a mile away. They were hot and sweltering when the job was done. After that the servants brought up the empty trunks. Tom and Carroll went to bathe in the creek just over the hill.

"You may invite me to take a walk about five o'clock," Sister Rosalie had said. "I shall have had my nap by that time. Sister Constantia will be with the child and I need the air. But mind you, I don't walk except with dandies. Have an eye to your dress."

"I say, Tom," said Carroll, for friendship under the shadow of death grows fast, and the two were now familiars, "but those women know what they are about with us."

"Rather," said Tom.

"Suppose the Abbess, as you call her, had held a prayer-meeting over us instead of sending for our best clothes—where would your nerve be now?"

"Twittering with the sparrows," said Tom, "and seeing death in every bush. But, say, how does this coat look?"

"Creased as the dickens. Rosalie will make you

ELEANOR DAYTON

go back and change it," chuckled Carroll, "and, I say, isn't she splendid looking? I wish she were my sister."

"Nearer your mother," said Tom.

"Gammon."

"Lovely grey hair," from Tom.

"She'd be just right as a sister," said Carroll; "young enough to see things your way and old enough to have authority."

"I think I prefer the old one," said Tom, meditatively. "Rosalie is fine, and she's seen a lot: that's plain. But the Abbess—I bet she has seen about the whole play. Talk about authority—just look at those eyes. She's French, you know. I wonder what her name is and how she comes to be here."

Carroll shrugged his shoulders. "We know Catholics in Maryland, and a question like that never occurs to us any more. Perhaps she's in exile as a penance. There's never any telling."

And then they fell to discussing their clothes again. At last they were dressed. Though the clothes had been spread out with great care, on a bank of fern, they were far from immaculate. Each youth brushed the other more scrupulously than ever he had brushed himself.

"I guess we'll do now," said Tom.

They turned into the wood to go back to the

ELEANOR DAYTON

cabin, but at the second step Carroll stopped and shivered.

"It comes over me, every now and then, how brutal we are. That child is dying, and all we are thinking of is keeping our own nerve up. My God, Tom, she'll never see the sunshine again, never hear the trees rustle, never smell the woods—ugh!"

Tom's face blanched and he glanced behind him involuntarily. Then his dark cheek flushed. He reached for Carroll's arm and shook him roughly.

"Come on," said he, "or I'll tell Rosalie."

The absurdity of his threat struck him and he laughed. His laugh twanged harsh with determination. Carroll smiled, though he still shuddered.

"You would think we were two boys," said he, "and Rosalie the school-mistress."

"So we are," said Tom, "and so is she, and she won't stand any nonsense. Come along."

It was even as Carroll had said about the coat. Sister Rosalie, fresh, cool, silvery, her bright face and violet eyes framed effectively by that hair which was greyer than most at her age, was awaiting them. She looked them up and down with an exacting eye.

"This will do for the first day," said she to Tom. "But do you know how to press clothes?"

He shook his head.

"I'll teach you. To-morrow morning you'll press

ELEANOR DAYTON

that coat and keep it pressed. And who selects your neckcloths?"

"I do," said Tom.

Sister Rosalie laughed.

"How would you like to make a shopping tour, when we get back to town, with a staid old nun for comrade?"

Tom declared his pleasure.

"You need some one to help out your taste," she went on. "Look at Mr. Carroll there. See how he and his coat and his neckcloth are all one. You are three. Oh, I'll teach you both lots of things before I am done." With a laugh and a brisk change of tone, she added: "Come boys, you don't mind my nonsense. Now we'll have our walk."

"And where shall we go?" asked Carroll.

"To the bridge first. Those wise, deep creatures, called men, have fitted us out with a hundred things we don't need and forgotten the things that count. Among others, flatirons. How are we to press Mr. Tom's coat without flatirons."

They stepped down a steep place in the track and came suddenly upon a sharp turn near the edge of a cliff that commanded a great view. Sister Rosalie stopped short and brought her hands together. "Isn't it beautiful!" she exclaimed. "How lucky we are to have our picnic in such a place!"

ELEANOR DAYTON

She looked from one youth to the other as she spoke. Tom did not flinch, but Carroll's face clouded. "The dark one is the steadier of the two," she thought, "but I am not sure that he is really the stronger."

"Isn't it pitiful," Carroll was saying, "that the poor little girl up there will never see this again."

Sister Rosalie turned and looked him straight in the eyes. For at least a minute she looked at him in silence. Then she said coldly: "That is not what you are thinking. You are not troubled about the child. You are troubled about yourself. You are thinking: 'How terrible it will be if I get the small-pox.' You are saying: 'How sad it will be if I never see this view again.' Aren't you?"

The flush upon Carroll's cheek ran up into his hair. He looked down.

Tom turned away his eyes. For a space they were all silent.

Suddenly Sister Rosalie laughed, but it was in a tone they had not heard before, a gentle winning tone that brought their eyes to her face. She was smiling and her eyes were all compassion. She reached out and took Carroll's hand, saying softly: "My dear boy, don't you know it's the test of courage to do the thing you're afraid to do? I appreciate your feelings—and yours too, Mr. Tom—I've had them all myself."

ELEANOR DAYTON

But we mustn't give way for a minute. We must laugh our way through this. You don't misunderstand me."

Carroll Dayton bent over and kissed her hand. Without withdrawing it, Sister Rosalie turned toward Tom and extended the other. An inimitably droll twinkle flashed in her eye.

"And you?" said she.

Tom was alert enough to catch the tone of burlesque she had thrown into her manner, quick enough to respond to it. With an extravagant air he dropped upon his knee and kissed the hand she extended.

"My children," said Sister Rosalie, still with that twinkle in her eye.

"Say babies," said Carroll, and all of them burst out laughing.

CHAPTER XVI

LIFE AND DEATH

THE day the child died was the one that tried them most. In the case of that poor waif, exposure and ill treatment were contributing causes. Her frail little body gave out on the fifth day.

As usual, Sister Constantia was watching by her in the early afternoon. Sister Rosalie was asleep. The boys were dressing at the brook with the extravagant care which Rosalie demanded. She had promised to take her walk somewhat earlier to-day, and it was not yet four when the two youths, in their splendid old-style dress, came sauntering along the path from the creek. Generally, when they came back from dressing, Sister Rosalie was sitting in a wicker rocker, placidly waiting. But to-day the chair stood empty under the beeches. The boys sat down, and now it was their turn to do the waiting.

Presently Sister Rosalie came out, bare-headed, with a troubled face.

"I can't go with you," said she. "The child is dying."

ELEANOR DAYTON

"What are we to do?" said Tom.

"Nothing."

"We must get word to the doctor," cried Carroll.

"Sister Constantia understands this malady quite as well as any physician, but it's not small-pox she's dying of, it's a little lifetime of ill treatment. You can't do anything, boys, and you mustn't fret. Go for a walk by yourselves. There's good fellows. Will you?"

They promised and she left them.

They strolled down the waggon track and paused at that bend in the road commanding the view where Sister Rosalie once took them to task. But to-day they lacked the firm will of that immensely vital woman, that will which held them like a tightened rein. This time it was Tom who spoke first.

"Carroll," said he, "would you be afraid of anything if the Sister went along?"

"Nothing," said Carroll.

"I am not afraid to die," said Tom, "but if I must, I am mighty glad she'll be with me at the end. I won't show the white feather with her."

"I wonder if we'll take it," said Carroll. "Hang it, I can't get that child out of my head. Perhaps she's dead now." He shut his eyes and for a moment neither spoke.

"Tom," said Carroll suddenly, "what do you

ELEANOR DAYTON

think about when you are away from the Sister and your thoughts go off by themselves?"

"I think of what is going on out there——" he made a sweep of his arm to indicate the valley and the horizon—"of the men and the conflict, the struggling and failing, the achievement, the fame, and then I think that perhaps I'll never have any part in it. What do you think of?"

"Our house at Dayton, my father and mother, my horse, and of tearing across country on a crisp day after the hounds, and the hunt balls at our place, and the smell of the woods in the spring, and all sorts of things like that."

Tom meditated.

"Odd," said he presently, "but I haven't thought of anything of that sort since we came here."

"I should think you would," said Carroll. "You are more of a horseman than I am. You have a better seat than any one I know, except my father. I should think you'd be on a horse, in imagination, and galloping down that valley and away from this cursed place, every time you stopped to think."

"No, it is always fame, reputation, doing things in the world, that I think of nowadays."

"Do you ever get ashamed, Tom—feel that at heart you are scared?"

ELEANOR DAYTON

"Often."

"And yet," said Carroll, "I have taken a dozen leaps with a horse when I risked a broken neck each time."

"Oh, but that's different. You were excited, and you were in motion. That's like courage in battle. But this thing of standing still, shut off from the world, with almost everybody afraid to come near you, and you wondering when death may step out from behind a tree and touch you——"

"It's 'Under the Sounding Rafter,' for a fact, isn't it?" said Carroll.

"Just that," said Tom. Then in a flash of devil-may-care sort of humour he added: "If I get through this and go back to the world once more, won't I know how to sing that song?"

Carroll laughed.

"It was cholera in their case, wasn't it? And there was a lot of them. At least, they had company. What a lonely wood this is!"

"Perhaps it is only ourselves," said Tom. "But it does seem lonely!"

"No, it is partly the wood. It is as different from our woods at Dayton as anything can be. You don't know what woods are in Ohio."

Tom looked about him and then forth across the valley again.

ELEANOR DAYTON

"I used to think our woods were magnificent."

"Wait till you come to Dayton. We have more birds, more flowers, more life and variety. Even in our present condition, we wouldn't be dismal in the woods at Dayton."

They fell silent, watching stormy purples that were gathering along the west. The day had been overcast and now the grey clouds were beginning to take colour before the storm. Presently Carroll said shyly: "Tom, don't you think about people these days?"

Tom flushed slightly.

"A little," said he.

"Look here, old man," blurted Carroll, "did you think I was in love with Eleanor?"

Tom laughed awkwardly.

"I'm not," said Carroll. "I thought I was, when I first came out—she is so lovely and so fine. That night at the farm I came near making a fool of myself, but I haven't thought of her seriously since we came to this prison of a wood. That's all you want to know, isn't it?"

Tom turned his face and gazed in silence across the valley.

"Carroll," said he presently, "one of the things I have been ashamed of is that I haven't thought more about her since we have been shut up here in the

ELEANOR DAYTON

shadow of death. I felt sure I was in love with her. We grew up together. She is such a beauty and everybody admires her so. And yet, ever since I realized my danger I was aware that my chief dread was not in the thought of leaving Eleanor. It was in the thought of dying without having made a name. Gad, man, if I love her, that is contemptible. And I hate to think it was all a fancy. It makes me wonder if any of my feelings are firm based. But I can't escape the fact."

The great clouds in the west were throwing up purple lights into the upper heaven and all the air was taking the tone of them. Tom made a splendid, dark, troubled figure on the edge of the cliff, with illimitable purpling space beyond it, which appealed to Carroll's sense of the beautiful. He did not, as yet, appreciate Tom's trouble. His mind was entirely that of a healthy boy. The discovery that he himself had been fooled by a fancy for Eleanor had not clouded him for an instant. He did not fathom the mind of his comrade, a mind full of high-pitched, half-formed ideals, very few of which showed upon the surface. He could not understand why Tom felt that he had been weighed and found wanting. This slow waiting for the advent of the Destroyer was affecting these two lads in extremely dissimilar ways. Carroll could not think of anything

ELEANOR DAYTON

to say and Tom seemed lost in his thoughts. For a long time there was silence

They were aroused by footsteps and, turning, they saw Sister Rosalie coming down the road. Neither man ever forgot that sight. She was bare-headed and the rising wind was full in her face. It blew back her hair—the lovely grey hair that gave to her face, in such marked degree, the quality of the exceptional—it whipped colour into her cheeks, it crushed her clothes against her and brought out the strength and spring of her figure. No painter could have had a finer model for Diana.

She glanced from one to the other and marked their clouded faces. She frowned.

“You geese!” she exclaimed. But the next moment her manner softened, her tone changed.

“The child is dead,” said she. “Come up and let us bury her at once.”

CHAPTER XVII

THE SUNSET LIGHT

AT first, Rosalie had shrunk from having Tom and Carroll see the burial.

"They have never in their lives stood still and waited for danger till now," she said to Constantia, "and, all things considered, they are doing wonderfully well. But I dread this. Let us bury her before they come back."

"Margaret," said her aunt, "you must not lose your faith in those boys. They will not fail you. We will not show indecent haste. Go down and bring them back, and then we will bury her."

Of all the things that ever happened to Tom Wilmot, that scene of the burial of the gipsy child seemed, in after-time, most like a dream. He remembered all the details, but as if he had dreamed rather than lived them—the walk up the track with Rosalie; Sister Constantia meeting them at the door; her quiet air of command; the dead child lying covered on a draped board; the walk into the wood among the purple shadows and the rifted lights to an open spot; he and Carroll bearing the dead; the

ELEANOR DAYTON

two nuns telling their beads; the fresh pit with the servants standing beside it; the lowering of the body; the praying of Sister Constantia; the Latin hymn sung by the nuns, while all of them were kneeling beside the grave; the tears in Rosalie's eyes; and then the sudden miracle of the sunset; the cracking open of the purple and grey and the streaming through them of the bar of crimson light; the bright glow of it on all their faces; the unconscious swelling and deepening of the hymn; and at last Sister Constantia's quiet voice saying: "Now let us say together those words which are so dear to us all, Our Lord's Prayer."

In the middle of that night Tom waked out of a nightmare with Rosalie's hand upon his forehead. He was singing at the top of his voice:

"One cup to the dead already,
And one to the next that dies."

CHAPTER XVIII

A PRICE PAID

WE have seen enough of that house in the dreadful wood. How the days lagged by after the burial of the child; how strange and unearthly seemed the sunshine; how mysterious the shadows; what a task it was to keep up the pretence of cheerfulness; how the strength of the two women, the firm peace in the eyes of Constantia, Rosalie's magnetic authority, seemed to grow with the need; how interminable, in spite of everything, seemed each haunted day; how sweet, remote, unattainable seemed the world they had left: all that need not be told. Let it pass like an evil dream. Pass, too, the actual events of the siege of the wood by the hosts of death—the seizure of Carroll; the arrival that very day of his father and mother, who were merely so much added trouble for the nuns; the frightful rigour of the case; those two days when his life was despaired of and frivolous Mrs. Dayton surprised them all by the way she rose to the emergency; his own knowledge that he was believed

ELEANOR DAYTON

to be dying; his desperate fight to live, like a drowning man beating back actual waves; the unexpected turn for the better; his recovery. As I say, we have seen enough of that wood where the pestilence held its court. Let us leave it. We have wandered in it among ghosts and shadows during six weeks. September has gone over us. October is bringing frost in the mornings and the leaves are turning gold and crimson. Two youths emerge from that wood very different from the two who went in. But only one shows the difference by an outward sign. Tom Wilmot has not changed in appearance, except, perhaps, by something in the eyes and by a certain quiet and reserve of manner. But poor Carroll! His beauty has all been left behind in that Wood of the Terrors. "I believe," he says, laughing, for all he thinks of is the joy of being alive again, "that the ghost of that poor little girl and the ghost of my own good looks roam the wood in the moonshine together." Carroll had passed through the utmost rigour of confluent small-pox. He was pitted deep and the number was not to be found. The skin was thickened, darkened, made coarse. The colour was ruined. Even the general effect of the features was spoiled. The observer's eye, held by the myriad indentations, was tricked by the irregularity of detail and lost sight of the whole. The ruin



ELEANOR DAYTON

was complete. No trace of Apollo now. It was a braver, manlier face which came back to the world from that wood of the shadow of death, but it was an ugly one.

CHAPTER XIX

ELEANOR FINDS HERSELF

“**A**UNTY,” said Eleanor, “don’t you want to walk home?”

They were coming out of the railway station in Cincinnati. They had said good-bye to Carroll and his parents, with whom they had left Tom, who was going up the road a way to see the last of Carroll. Olivia and Enfield Dayton were already in the carriage.

“Certainly, dear, if you wish,” said Miss Eliza. “Enfield, Eleanor and I will take the air.”

They walked a while in silence. The crisp autumn afternoon was keenly alive. Both women felt the stirring quality of the air.

“Aunty,” said Eleanor presently, “I have a confession to make.”

Miss Eliza smiled.

“Well?” said she.

“You remember the day you showed me the two portraits of Mary Carroll?”

“Of course.”

“And I promised then I would never be weak about my looks, but I fear I have been.”

ELEANOR DAYTON

"I don't believe so. What is it you have in mind?"

"It is a cruel, horrid thought, but I can't help feeling glad that Carroll had the small-pox and not I."

"You simple child," said Miss Eliza, laughing. "Your feelings aren't responsible for the case."

"There's worse to come, aunty. If I had had it, do you think I would take things as bravely as he has?"

"We are not sure yet that he has taken them bravely, though I believe for my part he will. The pinch is still before him. Just now he is so overjoyed at the mere fact that he's alive again, that he does not realize how much less of a personage he is than formerly. Did his mother talk to you on the subject?"

"Oh, dear, yes—poured out her heart. She is so bitter down at bottom, though she doesn't let him see. She knows what it means. And that is what makes me think of myself. Suppose I were as changed as he is? Suppose, when I came into a room, people should say: 'There's that big ugly Dayton girl.' I wonder if I could stand it!"

"I think you could, Eleanor," said her aunt.

"But how about other people. Would they care for me still?"

"The fine ones would."

ELEANOR DAYTON

"Aunt Eliza, here's my real confession. You remember you asked me at the farm, the night we were vaccinated, if all were well with me, and I fibbed and said 'yes.' And then you asked if it was the men, and I fibbed again and said 'no.' That is, I half fibbed. What was making me miserable, that night, was the vision of Carroll's face. The night before, I almost thought I loved it. But the vision of it turned ugly made me feel I never wanted to see it again. The feeling humiliated me. I had thought I was above all that."

"I am glad you had your heart revealed to you so sharply," said Miss Eliza.

"But think of the cowardliness of it," said Eleanor.

"My dear, you are just a trifle morbid at times—do you know that? Don't you feel, this afternoon, much as you did on our steps seventeen years ago?"

"Very much. I feel again as if I were facing something too big for me. As if life came up to a big door that was shut square in my face, though I don't know why. Must we always feel like that?"

For two or three minutes Miss Eliza did not answer. They walked on and the air was brisk in their faces. The slanted afternoon gold touched their cheeks with a light warm finger.

"Eleanor," said her aunt, "we never know in advance how things are going to be with us. But it

ELEANOR DAYTON

is ruin to worry on that account. The sensible way to look at this strange little episode is simply this: you gave way to a foolish weakness and thereby discovered how groundless was a fancy you had indulged. Be thankful you exposed the fancy. Make up your mind to rise above the weakness. But I think you have overcome it already. How do you feel toward Carroll now?"

There was a sudden light in Eleanor's eyes. Her natural smile flashed across her lips.

"Relieved," said she.

"What does that mean?" said her aunt.

"This is the silliest part of all," went on Eleanor, blushing. "I had almost resolved, if he asked me, that I would say 'yes,' just out of pure shame of myself. I hadn't quite resolved—I must admit."

"Eleanor," said Miss Eliza, "a girl is never safe till she has rejected a man. It steadies her, gives her a grip on herself. Now, just consider that you have done that with Carroll, or that Fate has done it for you, and don't ever be so silly again."

By this time they were at their own door.

"It is chilly this afternoon," said Miss Eliza; "let us start a fire."

They went into the morning parlour, and Eleanor kindled the fire. It was the first of the season. Her aunt had sat down directly in front of the hearth;

ELEANOR DAYTON

Eleanor dropped to the floor at her feet, one arm across her aunt's knee, and for a space both were silent. They watched the crackling flame leap in and out among the logs, and both thought the same thought: the first fire in autumn begins a new year.

"Aunty," said Eleanor suddenly, rising to her knees and putting her arms about her aunt, "my confession has set me free. It is so hard for me to speak out, but when I do, it clears up everything. I'll never be silly about beauty again."

"Of course not," said Miss Eliza.

"And I won't be like Mary Carroll, come what may."

"You don't suppose I doubt that."

"I have been fighting her, as it seemed to me, all this while, and I have felt for some time that I had beaten her. But I had to tell you to make it complete. You dear, dear auntie."

She drew her arms tight and laid her head on Miss Eliza's shoulder.

"All the good that is in me has come from you," she whispered.

"Nonsense, my dear," said Miss Eliza. "Go upstairs and take a nap and come down to a new world. That's the first fire of the autumn, dearie, and the year begins again."

ELEANOR DAYTON

"Yes, aunt," said Eleanor. "But I must kiss you first."

When she was gone, Miss Eliza sat long in silence, gazing into the fire. At last she said to herself with conviction: "Yes, the child has gone out of her. Now for the woman."

CHAPTER XX

IN WHICH TOM IS FOOLED

WHEN Eleanor came down to supper that night she was herself again—the girl she remained ever after. Miss Eliza, searching her with loving, critical eyes, drew a satisfied breath, and thought: “It is well with her. We have beaten the Carroll blood.”

Before coming into the dining-room, Eleanor had gone for a moment to the morning parlour. At table, her cheeks glowed and her eyes were dancing. “Aunty,” said she, when the meal was over, “come with me, I want to show you something.”

On the chimney-shelf in the morning parlour stood the double miniature of Mary Carroll.

“I defy her to the death,” laughed Eleanor. “There she is for all men to see, plain statement of what I may come to look like. If a man comes courting me, I say: ‘Go propose to her, to the ugly one.’ If you want only the young one, I won’t consider you. Leave hope behind who enters here, if you are after her.”

“You rogue,” said Miss Eliza, happily, and to

ELEANOR DAYTON

herself she said: "We have won at every point. She'll never change again."

When, later in the evening, Tom Wilmot came in, dressed as only the dandy of those high days could dress, Eleanor would hardly wait for him to complete his report of the very last of Carroll.

"*Exeunt omnes*, and enter destiny," said she. "What do you think of this, Tom?"

She pointed to the ugly face.

"Horrid!" said Tom.

She drew herself up.

"You are frank, sir."

Tom stared. He was flushed and his manner was slightly nervous. There was something on his mind.

Eleanor burst into laughter.

"It's my future, Tom. That is what I shall look like at forty."

"That!"

She told him the story.

"That's absurd," said he.

She shook her head.

"No, sir; that's what I am going to be. Don't you pity me?"

Tom laughed—a short laugh of unbelief.

"I can't imagine you ever needing pity."

"You hard-hearted wretch!"

ELEANOR DAYTON

"What's got into you to-night, Eleanor?"

"Nothing. I've just faced my fate and conquered it. There I am. Will you love me, Tom, when I look like that?"

Tom jumped in his chair, and his eyes sought the fender. The two were alone in the room. For a moment he hesitated. Then he lifted his eyes, turned slowly toward her and said: "I love you now, Eleanor." She blanched an instant and looked down, but an instant only. Picking up the double miniature, she covered the young Mary with her left hand and held the old one between herself and Tom.

"Sure?" said she.

Tom flushed as if he had been struck.

"Oh, put that down," said he.

"I told you you wouldn't stand the strain," said Eleanor, dropping the miniature into her lap.

"Don't you intend to take me seriously?" demanded Tom.

Again the ugly miniature rose in front of her face.

"Not till you can propose to her," said Eleanor from behind it.

Tom sat a while in silence. He was hurt, chagrined. He believed she was merely ridiculing him, and what youth can bear ridicule? Eleanor gazed into the fire, her hands folded in her lap. Not for

ELEANOR DAYTON

worlds would she have had Tom know how her heart was beating.

"Is that your only answer, Eleanor?" said he presently.

Her nerve was going and she did not trust herself to speak. But she nodded so brightly, smiled so tauntingly, that he was taken in.

Again he sat still for a while.

"Well, I'll say good-night," said he.

He rose and stood hesitating.

"Are you sure you mean it, Nellie?"

She made a movement of her hands toward the miniature in her lap.

"Oh, confound it!" said he, and strode from the room.

An hour went by, during which Eleanor gazed steadily at the fire, the miniature of Mary Carroll in her lap, her folded hands lying idle. The tears that had threatened to come, when the hour began, were dried in her eyes.

"Yes," said she to herself, "I did right."

But her lip trembled.

She rose, replaced the miniature on the chimney-shelf, made sure at a pier glass that there were no tears in her eyes, and went up to her own room.

She threw open a window and looked forth into the garden, across it to the Wilmot house. A light

ELEANOR DAYTON

burned there in one window, and she knew it was Tom's. She turned quickly to make sure she had not lighted a candle. Then she looked forth again. Down there in the garden she and Tom had been playmates long years before. It was there he asked her to go to Spring Grove—that day which was the beginning of things. She recalled so many days when he and she had been happy children together. The tears came and this time her eyes overflowed.

"But I did right," she murmured with a sob. "It isn't the woman he loves; it is only her beautiful shell."

Across the garden boomed the great bass voice singing: "Under the Sounding Rafter." But how new it was! How different from the song he used to sing! What passion, mystery! What a man there was behind it! How she thrilled, how her heart ached, to that splendid singing!

Then, suddenly, she realized what she was doing. With a motion as of tearing herself away, she seized the window and drew it shut. She flung away from it and cast herself weeping upon her bed.



CHAPTER XXI

MASQUERADE

ELEANOR was much criticised that winter because she paraded Mary Carroll in the face of the men.

"It's merely to show herself off," said Sally Carter. "I'd be ashamed to be so transparent."

At first the men laughed. But Eleanor was so insistent that presently they began to look at the two faces with the critical eye.

"Is it really possible, do you suppose," said James Wingfield, just then the greatest catch going, "that the one face could become the other?"

"It did once," said Sally sweetly, "there is no denying that."

"No," said James, "I suppose not."

"And Eleanor is the living image of Mary in her youth."

"That's true. What a beauty she was! What a beauty Eleanor is!"

"For the present," said Sally kindly.

James pondered the subject, and so did many another young spark who went frequently to the Dayton house.

ELEANOR DAYTON

It was Eleanor herself who kept the talk going.

"How systematic she is!" said Sally. "But she'll get her quits when her face begins to change."

"Now, tell me, Miss Eleanor, truly," said James Wingfield more than once, "do you really believe it, or are you just playing with us?"

"Come here, Mr. Wingfield."

She went to the glass with the miniature in her hand.

"Don't you see how that is going to widen out and grow coarse"—she traced with her finger a new line alongside the reflection of her cheek—"and be just like hers. And see how I'll change there—and there—and there."

She was teasing him to the top of her bent.

"A good dunce," said she to her aunt, "who must propose to me, and then he can marry Sally, who wants him."

Eleanor's way with the men Sally never comprehended, nor did any other girl of the stamp of Sally; Eleanor never "made eyes," never flattered, never acted. She was merely "nice" to them, she said; and they left the other girls and flocked about her. She looked them straight in the eyes, smiling deeply in her own, and made friends of them while they cared to stay. One of her speeches that was oft repeated was that she intended to marry a blind



ELEANOR DAYTON

man, because only with such a man could she be sure he didn't marry her for her looks. As she was undeniably the most beautiful girl in town, these reckless sayings gave handles to malice.

"Always talking about herself," was said over and over, "and always on her beauty."

She was not always talking about herself and was not always on her beauty. But her pose was so unusual, her parade of the miniatures so amusingly cynical, her occasional remarks upon beauty so audacious, that these only were remembered; the thousand other things she said and did were forgotten.

By her family, Eleanor was variously estimated. Old Enfield Dayton ha-ha'd over her. Miss Eliza showed amused eyes. "I should never have thought of doing it myself, dear," said she, "but follow your bent, if you want to. It won't fool the right man when he comes."

Colonel Mallon was seriously troubled. "Eleanor," he would say, "how can you be so brazen? Mary Carroll is a family skeleton. She should be put away in the top of the closet, not paraded before the world."

"And is that what you will do with me, Cousin Joseph, when I'm old and look like her?"

"Eleanor, you really shock me."

ELEANOR DAYTON

Her answer was a laugh.

"Cousin Joseph, don't be so serious. Think of the princesses in the fairy tales who must go about under hideous disguises until the true knight finds them out. Why doesn't that apply to ugly women?"

"Life is not a fairy tale," said Colonel Mallon.

But there was no arguing with Eleanor. She had chosen her rôle and she played it. By degrees people took her at her word. They began to see that her face would go the same way as Mary Carroll's.

"No wonder, she's such a desperate flirt," they would say, "she knows it won't last. She is having her fling while she may. When the wane begins she'll marry a boy who has money and settle down and grow ugly."

And so the winter passed and the summer of '59 was upon them.

Why did Eleanor seem to quicken that spring, along with the physical world? Why was her colour so brilliant? Her eyes so bright?

It has not been necessary hitherto to say much of the private affairs of Mr. Thomas Wilmot, nor to record with exactness his comings and goings. But it happens that he was then a senior at Harvard. The time which he lost in quarantine made him so late in returning that he was unable to take vacation



ELEANOR DAYTON

at Christmas time. All through Eleanor's first winter Tom was not on the scene. But it was only natural to suppose that he would come home in June. It was in May that Eleanor was most radiant. June came, and also the news that Tom would not come back. He and Carroll Dayton had planned to continue their friendship in a trip to Europe.

Eleanor had heard from Carroll frequently during the winter. His were manly letters worth reading. He told her of his changed position in the county, how nobody noticed him nowadays when he came into a ball-room. He remembered that every eye used to turn in his direction. He rode to hounds, and he was but one of twenty. Once upon a time the field saluted him like a personage. "And it is so odd," he wrote in one of his letters, "but I never was conscious of that at the time. I understand it now. I confess the new way was a little unpleasant at first. I grew red, I can tell you. But it is lots more sensible, when you come to think of it, and the ill-wind proverb is true after all. For mother sees now that I must study and work and be a man, so she has consented to let me go to college. I will enter the University of Virginia next fall. I'd go to Harvard if Tom weren't so nearly done."

And so the friends had arranged their trip together, and Tom did not come home at all in the year '59.

ELEANOR DAYTON

He returned from Europe just in time to resume work at Cambridge, where he wanted an extra year. Carroll became the oldest freshman in the University of Virginia.

And how about Eleanor? She drooped a little at the opening of the summer. It was the heat, she said. But she rallied at Saratoga, and was the gayest of the gay. She came home in September rather tired. She had a slight illness. As she began to go about again, she found it a bit hard to take up her rôle once more.


The men palled on her. The part was played. She was tired of herself.

"Enfield," said Miss Eliza, "suppose I take her to Europe. I never have been, you know. Joseph is going again this winter. Suppose we put him under contribution and go along with him."

"Capital!" said old Enfield.

And so it came about that they shipped upon the southerly passage, and landed at Naples on the very day when, in far-away Cincinnati, old Enfield sat down to his Thanksgiving dinner.

On the same steamer crossed those two nuns who had played so great a part in the lives of Tom and Carroll.



CHAPTER XXII

REVELATION

IT is the night before Class Day at Harvard, in the year 1860. Tom Wilmot, in a window-seat of Holworthy, looks down into the moonlit college yard, and blows out clouds of smoke. His chum is in Boston to-night, and Tom is alone with his thoughts.

In the two years, or near that, since we saw him last, he has changed not a little. His face is stronger. The boy is gone out of it. As he leans against the window-frame and slowly, noiselessly emits the smoke from his lips, he is worth considering.

In the little world of the university Tom is a personage. He has pulled a fine oar in a great race; when he graduated, he had a part at commencement; he has written some and even got a short essay into the "Atlantic Monthly," the old "Atlantic" of the great days.

Tom is pleased with himself to-night, for he has recently made a crucial discovery, and has taken the first step out of many, that are now due. On his table is a letter from the North German Steamship Company, giving him passage on the *Maximilian*.

ELEANOR DAYTON

"And Eleanor, I suppose," thought Tom, "is now in Paris. She was leaving Nice when she wrote last and that was two months ago."

Tom and Eleanor had corresponded for about a year—not very regularly, but in a way. After leaving Cincinnati, Tom had gone for some time without writing to her. But there came a night when her face burned in his memory, an April night, with the moonlight making ivory gleams in the yard. That night he wrote to her. For a month she did not answer. When she did, her letter was pleasant, friendly, no more. Tom fretted over it, but even then he had a sense of justice and he said to himself: "It is all I have a right to expect."

With that letter Tom began examining himself. Had he been sincere; really, deeply sincere when he proposed to Eleanor? If he had been, would he have taken "No" for an answer? Would any chatter about fading beauty discourage a genuine lover? But, setting all that aside, what were his feelings now? He had grown up with her, knew how rare she was; he had thought he loved her. To be sure, when the shadow of death surrounded him, he forgot her. He had thought of himself—that is, of fame. When he recovered himself, he had proposed—yes—but was there a genuine feeling behind his proposal? Had he, that time, the sort of love that



ELEANOR DAYTON

will coin itself in sacrifice? And what had he now?

"I believe," he had said to himself at last, "that I love her. But I'll make sure before I speak again. I'll test it thoroughly."

Therefore he did not go home that summer, when Eleanor had hoped he would come, and, instead, went abroad with Carroll. The next year he filled his life with the presence of woman. He knew more girls, he dined and went out more, than any one else in Harvard.

"What a gay chap Wilmot is!" people said. "And yet he doesn't look it."

Tom was not gay. He was wrestling out his problem. The more he saw of other girls, the more he wanted Eleanor. But he remembered how love had once shrivelled up in the presence of death. Could he be sure he was above that now? If he were again shut up in the Dayton wood, there to await the plague, would Eleanor once more fade out of his heart? Would the sting of the situation lie again in the blighting of his ambition? Or would self, ambition, be swallowed up in the thought of his love?

When a young man thinks such thoughts, he is a long way toward his redemption. The light broke upon Tom, as it breaks on most people, unexpectedly,

ELEANOR DAYTON

without apparent cause. One afternoon in the spring of '60 he was taking a nap. He opened his eyes presently and lay for a moment or two between sleep and waking, dimly aware of the delicious weather, the sunshine in the open windows, the bird-calls in the trees of the yard. Somehow, the figure of Eleanor brushed lightly through his half dream. He thought she had stepped across the room, going softly as if not to wake him, and had disappeared into his study. Tom's eyes snapped open and he sat up on his bed. It was all so vivid that he sprang to his feet, and had gone into the study before he realized.

He dropped into a chair, murmuring: "If only she were here!"

He sat a long while, and it seemed to him not so much that he thought, as that things came to life within him, he knew not how, whence nor why. Old things faded out. Hesitation became a faint memory. He became aware of depths of feeling he had never guessed. It was as if the icy mask of a frozen well, that hitherto had reflected only his own face, was shivered open, revealing beneath it unfathomable spaces, and far among them the stars of heaven.

"Eleanor," he cried out, "you could trust me. I'd be worthy of you."



ELEANOR DAYTON

Old Mr. Wilmot had written Tom that he could have a good large sum as his birthday gift, and he might go abroad, if he wished, for the summer, or even for a year. Tom had been hesitating what to do. He hesitated no longer.

"I'll go straight to her," he thought. "If she'll have me, I'll come back with her, and we'll all go to Cincinnati together. If I'm too late——"

He set his teeth.

And so, on that night before Class Day, he was in high spirits. He was not allowing himself to feel misgivings. "I know I have no ground to hope, but I won't think of that," said he. "I have found my heart, I know I love her—real love, the love that endures forever. I am a man now."

That night he wrote to her, at Paris, mentioning that he was coming over on the next sailing of the *Maximilian*.

CHAPTER XXIII

WE PART WITH ROSALIE

WHILE Tom at Harvard fought out his problem, there was a great force involved which he did not fully reckon. It was the influence of the Sister Rosalie.

To Eleanor was revealed how that force had worked. And it came about in this way.

On the ship coming over the two pairs of women—on each side an aunt and a niece—became friends. They had seen each other, of course, at Cincinnati, where Miss Eliza and Eleanor had both attempted to show gratitude to the nuns. But, naturally, the opportunities were infrequent. Now, for near a month, on a slow, old-fashioned steamer, they were close associates. Late into many a night Eleanor sat on deck with Rosalie under shining stars, in that vast poetic hush of the quiet sea. That mystery of the outer sea, that sense of being removed from earth almost to the threshold of the infinite, permeated their thoughts. The deep places of their hearts became less secret. They drifted in talk to the things, the moments, that had searched their souls.



ELEANOR DAYTON

"My dear," said Rosalie, on one of these nights, "I have long wanted to know something, and now I think I have found it out. Have you any suspicions what it is?"

"No, Sister."

"The state of your heart."

Eleanor's breath quickened. She turned bright eyes upon Rosalie and threw up her brilliant smile like a buckler. Rosalie laughed.

"No need for that," said she, taking the girl's hand. "We have passed that stage—you and I—have we not?"

Eleanor hesitated, looking full in the nun's eyes. Then her smile vanished and her eyes were grave.

"Yes," said she, "we have."

She leaned back in her chair, holding Rosalie's hand, and waited.

"I will begin at the beginning," said the nun, after a pause, "and tell you about the time in the wood. I saw a great deal of him those days, and I learned to love him—as a mother might. All the time Carroll was ill, he and I went for a walk alone every afternoon. He was so fine and big and brave. But he was young; mere living was still sweet to him—the mere animal desire to retain breath. But this would not have stirred me, except with mere pity,

ELEANOR DAYTON

had it not been for something else. He was ashamed of that lust of life. He felt it was selfish, cowardly. And you, dear, were the cause of his shame."

She paused and looked at Eleanor, but Eleanor's eyes were on the deck. She resumed:

"Yes, he was ashamed on account of you. Both he and Carroll when they came into the wood of the shadows thought they loved you. But in Carroll you were sponged out by the awakened lust of life. In Tom you were only over-clouded. But the lad had a mind to perceive what had happened to him. He scorned himself for a fickle lover. Poor, dear boy"—

Rosalie laughed softly.

"—how transparent he was! How he turned his mind inside out, never dreaming he had done so! I had his secret at the end of our third walk. At the end of a week I spoke out. Said I: 'Tom, do you love Miss Dayton?' He stared at me and turned crimson. 'How did you know that?' said he. 'I didn't,' I laughed, 'but I do now.' Then I was serious with him and he came out with the whole story. He had loved you always, and yet, here in the shadow of death, he thought more about life and ambition than he did about you. Can you guess, Eleanor, what I told him?"

The girl shook her head without raising her eyes.



ELEANOR DAYTON

"I told him that if I were a girl again I should envy you."

Eleanor gave Rosalie one quick glance and then let fall her eyes again. They were like stars.

"Yes, my dear, that is what I told him. I said to him: 'It is not that you are a fickle lover, but that you are a boy. If you were fickle,' said I, 'you'd not give the matter two thoughts. The bottom part of you, the man-part, loves her, but that part of you hasn't mastered the rest. The boy-part still rules your nerves. No matter how you hide the fact you are still afraid of death.' That is how I talked to him. We had a great many talks about it, and always I told him the same things. 'Wait,' said I, 'the course of true love never ran smooth. You two will have each other yet.' And now I am more sure of it than ever. Shall I tell you why?"

Eleanor did not answer immediately. Then with an impulsive movement she slipped to the deck at Sister Rosalie's feet and linked her hands over Rosalie's knee.

"I'll confess," said she, "I love him with all my heart, and yet—I don't know how I did it, but I did, and I might do it again—I drove him away from me."

And then she told her story, told of the flippant way in which she had refused him; of his going

ELEANOR DAYTON

away; of his not coming back when she hoped and longed for him.

"But he didn't love me truly, Rosalie, and I won't have him without true love—no matter how it hurts."

Rosalie stroked her hair softly. "You did right, Eleanor, all except your flippant manner, and that, I suppose, you couldn't help."

"I'd have cried, right out before him, if I'd done anything else."

"And after all, what difference does it make?" said Rosalie. "Love is not to be scared off by a laugh—true love, that is. He'll come back to you, knowing his own mind, proven and tested, and you shall have the great love, the love that outlives death, which many people never know."

They parted at Rome, but Eleanor and Rosalie wrote to each other all that winter. In March Eleanor went down from Paris, where St. Antoine had painted her, to Nice for the spring. It was at the opening of May that she received a letter from Sister Constantia telling her that Rosalie was ill. "But do not grieve, dear Miss Eleanor," wrote the old nun; "though the doctors call it cancer, it is really God's mercy, and so Rosalie thinks of it. But she would like to see you again."

Eleanor hurried to Paris.



ELEANOR DAYTON.

"Yes, dear," said Rosalie. "God is merciful. The doctors say there is no hope. They are all atheists. It's the first hope I have had in twenty years. I never told you my story, but I will before I go."

During the month and more that followed, Eleanor saw her often. She lay in a private ward of the great Hospital of the Samaritans, and no one in Paris was more cheerful than the dying Rosalie.

One day toward the end of June, about ten in the forenoon, Eleanor sat by a window of the Hotel Austerlitz, looking out across the Rue de Rivoli, into the garden of the Tuileries. She held Tom's letter from Cambridge in her hand. It was a pleasant, ordinary letter which mentioned casually that he would sail on the *Maximilian*.

There was a knock on the door and a note was delivered to her. It was from Sister Constantia. "Rosalie is failing in strength," wrote the sister, "and begs you to be sure to see her to-day. She has something to say to you."

Eleanor went into her aunt's room and showed her the note.

"I feel I must go, aunty," said she. "How can we manage about Monsieur St. Antoine?"

For this was the day of the private view and they had promised to be at St. Antoine's by three.

ELEANOR DAYTON

They were a long way from the Hospital of the Samaritans.

"Suppose you dress now," said Miss Eliza. "We can have *déjeuner* early. You drive to the hospital at once and we will call for you later."

That was how Eleanor came to visit the hospital on her way to the studio.

Rosalie lay among her pillows, wasted almost to a skeleton, but serene as ever.

"It is good-bye, Eleanor, this time," said she, "but you must not be sad over it. You are devout, Eleanor, are you not?"

"I try to be," said the girl.

"You believe absolutely in a life to come?"

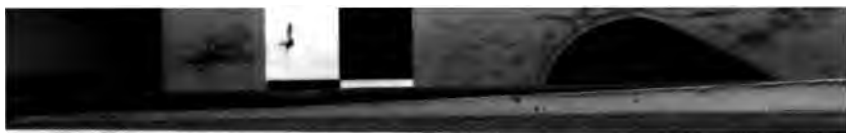
"Yes."

"You believe you will see me again, just as surely as if I were merely going across the Seine, not across the grave?"

"Yes, Rosalie."

The dying woman looked long into the eyes of the beautiful girl.

"Dear Eleanor," said she at last. "Life is a mystery and there are only two keys to it. One is Love, the other is Sacrifice. The first is the golden one and the other is only silver. But both unlock the door. Everything else merely bolts it tighter."



ELEANOR DAYTON

Eleanor struggled to keep back the tears.

"I can believe that, Rosalie," said she.

"I wanted to tell you this before I died," went on Rosalie, "to give my evidence, as it were, so that if anything should go wrong in your life, I shall have done what I could to buttress your faith. Everything has gone wrong in my life, dear. I had the golden key in my hand once, but it was snatched away from me. For a time I was hopeless. Then I found the other key. I won't say that I have been happy, for that is a sacred word, and means for me just one thing, but I have been content and life has been filled with God's mercy."

"There are so many people who are nobler because of you, Rosalie."

"I did something for you, Eleanor," said the nun, smiling. "I helped Tom over his darkest place, though I doubt if he knows it. And I am sure God will give you two the golden key. But if anything should happen, dear, remember you must not despair. I was married just a year, Eleanor, and then he was killed at the head of his regiment in Algiers. And only a year after, the child went. For a while I was a mad woman. But my aunt slowly steadied me. One day she told me her story. We had never known why she took the veil, for she was very frivolous as a girl. She had been engaged in secret, but

ELEANOR DAYTON

she took it into her head to put him to some ridiculous test—they were horribly sentimental, the girls were, in those days, about 1830—and so sent him off for a year to the Orient, and he died there of a fever. She shamed me into firmness, her case was so much sadder than mine. But she had kept her grief to herself. You and I are the only people that have ever known her story. You must keep it sacred. And so I followed her, and we have been nurses together for nearly twenty years. You understand why I tell you."

Eleanor's tears would not be kept back.

"It is my mother's story, dear Rosalie, except——"

"Except what?"

"Dear mother was weak and her sorrow crushed her. She died when I was two years old."

"You have never despised her because she was weak, Eleanor?"

"Oh, no, no—only pitied."

"You must never do anything else. That is where you Protestants—you don't mind my saying it—are harder than we Catholics. I can't see why it is, except, perhaps, because you never pray to the sorrowing Mother. But you find it so hard to forgive the weak and be patient with the sinful. Even in love you seem, so often, to have a hard-and-fast image of what it should be, and if that image is not



ELEANOR DAYTON

realized, you cry out that Love is false. Don't ever make any mistake like that, will you, Eleanor?"

"No, Rosalie, no."

"Forget yourself, dear. Prepare to be surprised by Love. Think of it as something too glorious for you to imagine in advance, not as a cut-and-dried affair that can be forecast with accuracy, where every part must tally with your preconception of it. You will do so. You will be a good Catholic in this respect, won't you?"

Rosalie smiled as she said it, and Eleanor laughed back through her tears. She was thinking of her mother. Both women were silent.

"Well," said Rosalie, "in return for all these promises, I'll show you something. It is under the prayer-book there. Read it to yourself."

It was a letter from Tom. He had not heard of Rosalie's illness, and had written her at the Samaritan Hospital in Cincinnati, whence the letter had been forwarded to Paris. When Eleanor finished it, she knew the story of Tom's self-examination. "You see, dear Sister Rosalie," Tom concluded, "I have fought it out, and it is just as you said. The man-part of me has mastered the rest and I know I love her with all my heart. Whether she will ever care for me, is another matter. But I know I shall love her always, and I feel now as if I could serve

ELEANOR DAYTON

her truly, bravely, whether she cared for me or not, clear to the end. If I should now be put under the shadow of death, you would see me in a very different state of mind from the one you saw in the wood."

Eleanor raised her eyes and met Rosalie's.

"You mustn't kiss me, dear," cried Rosalie, putting out a restraining hand; "my flesh is all contaminated."

Then she went on talking, low and earnestly, upon the reality of the life of the spirit, the unreality of everything beside. After a while Sister Constantia came in saying that Miss Eliza and Colonel Mallon were below.

In a few moments Eleanor joined them.

As they drove along, Colonel Mallon remarked carelessly: "You would never suspect from the look of Paris to-day that the winds had blown and the rains descended."

"Where?" cried Eleanor.

"The news is from Brest. There is a terrific gale from the north."

Eleanor sank back upon the cushions.

"But the *Maximilian* can't be due yet," she kept saying to herself. "It can't be due yet."



CHAPTER XXIV

AT ST. ANTOINE'S

HOW Eleanor behaved in St. Antoine's studio that afternoon we know. The girl was on edge.

Tom's letter; the long talk with Sister Rosalie; the face of the dying woman; the story of her lost love; her life of patient sacrifice; the news of the gale at Brest—co-operated to afflict her. But at first she carried it off. She forced herself to forget things. She compelled herself to put on her usual manner.

For a little while she succeeded. There was a moment, just after Napoleon came in, when she was herself. But it was a moment only. It was over before she had taken the pose of the portrait and stood for him to gaze at. In that wearying stillness while he studied her, the reaction came. All her troubles returned to her. She heard Rosalie's dying voice, heard the shrieking of the wind up the channel. What if Rosalie's fate should be repeated?

And then Napoleon made his strange remark about the portrait—that it was what she would be



ELEANOR DAYTON

when she had passed through a great tragedy. It electrified her, terrified her. She saw a sinking ship; saw her mother; Rosalie; felt herself repeating it. To hide her feelings, she used bravado. For five minutes, while Lady Sefton sneered and the dainty French woman insinuated, she longed to fly at their throats. At last, she could no longer endure inaction, and she flung the wine-glass across the room.

The company was aghast, none more so than Eleanor herself. She felt she had made a scene. She felt like a child again, and should have liked to hide her head in her aunt's lap. For a moment the silence was tense.

It was Metier who brought them out of it.

"Lady Sefton," said he in his usual quiet way, just as if nothing at all had happened, "will you so far honour me that I may point out to you some things I admire in the portrait of the Duchess of Suffolk?"

"With pleasure, monsieur."

Lady Sefton had had enough of the episode.

The tension broken, talk was resumed; people eddied into groups again and the Americans made their escape. Captain Orville, indeed, insisted on going down to their carriage with them. It was while Eleanor was saying some conventional thing

ELEANOR DAYTON

at parting—she seated in the carriage, he standing beside it—that a boy came along with papers. He called out something about *Maximilian*.

“Get me a paper, please,” said she to Orville.

He handed her one and there on the first page, right under her eye, was a telegram to this effect: “A German liner is ashore to the west of Ushant Island. It is believed to be the *Maximilian*, due about this time.”

“Cousin Joseph,” she cried, “Tom Wilmot is on that ship.”

The colour had fled from her face. She was marble white. Colonel Mallon seemed dazed.

“Joseph,” cried Miss Eliza, “have him drive to Lloyd’s.”

“Of course, of course,” cried Mallon, and he gave directions.

Miss Eliza bowed to Captain Orville, but Eleanor sat like a statue holding her aunt’s hand, while the houses whirled past.

CHAPTER XXV

HOW TOM WAS PROVEN

THE dark sea rolling heavily on the outmost reef to the west of Ushant was grinding the ship to bits. Already it was half submerged. Very soon it would be gone.

Tom Wilmot stood by the rail and watched the lowering of a boat. The others had got off safely. There was one more besides this. If Tom was to have a chance at all, it would be in that boat.

He looked up and saw the captain on the bridge. He was as calm—stolid, some people said—as on the day he sailed. He showed no more emotion than when, amid the cheering of the dock, their last cable was flung off, the ship swung free and the band, which had been playing "The Star-Spangled Banner," crashed suddenly into "Der Wacht am Rhine." Tom looked about and saw the officers quietly minding their business, the seamen as cool as if in harbour. The ship had been splendidly handled. Not a man had misbehaved. They were sinking, but what of that?

Tom turned toward the sea and gazed out across

ELEANOR DAYTON

the brutal rollers. The face of Eleanor filled his eyes. If only he could see her—just once. If only he could tell her his love. He did not ask, this moment, for more than just to tell her—just that she should know how he had changed; that she should know she was all in all to him, and life and death were trifles!

The boat slid away down the slope of a great wave, and the other, the last one left by the storm, was now almost full.

"There is room for just one more," cried the officer in command. "Who is it?"

Tom started out of his dream. He found that only two passengers remained on deck—himself and an old man. For ten seconds, perhaps, Tom did not speak. But ten seconds may be longer than a year. Eleanor's face was luring him across the waters; his heart-strings seemed to be cracking; and then, somehow, he had a fancy that that girl's own spirit bade him stay.

"It would disgrace her," he thought. Turning to the old man, he said:

"You first, sir."

"No, no," cried the old man, "I have lived my life. You go."

Tom caught him in his arms and lifted him up.

"Steady there!"

ELEANOR DAYTON

But it was too late. A wave wrenched the boat away and the oars bent as the seamen jerked on the stroke. A second more and they would have been swamped. Tom looked up and saw the captain gazing down at him.

"My son," said the old man, "'the Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away; blessed be the name of the Lord.'"

Tom bent his head, but did not answer. He felt faint and dizzy and held to the rail for support. He had lost his chance. He would never see her. She would never know.

Presently some one touched his arm and he looked up. He and the captain were alone by the rail.

"Wilmot," said he—they were no longer captain and passenger, they were simply two men on a sinking ship—"are you married?"

Tom shook his head.

"You are lucky," said the captain, and turned away. Across his shoulder he added: "Come down to my cabin and have a drink."

Tom followed him as in a dream. The brandy seemed to break the chill that was upon him, and he found himself able to think again.

"Is there any chance for us?" he asked the captain.

"None."

ELEANOR DAYTON

They sat silent, regarding their glasses.

"I am glad to have known you, Wilmot," said the captain; "that was a square deal you gave the old chap just now, even if it didn't help him."

Tom drank off his glass. If only the captain had known about Eleanor!

"What chance to swim to land?" asked Tom after a moment or two of silence.

The captain looked him up and down. "For you, perhaps, one in ten thousand. For anybody else, none at all."

Tom rose to his feet.

"I am going to try it," said he.

"I was in hope so," said the captain. "You will take a letter?"

"Of course. I am going to write one myself."

They went into the main saloon, where several officers and the white-haired old passenger, all strapped into life-preservers, were sitting before a bottle of champagne. The old man was telling a story. It was a ridiculous scene had Tom been in a mood to observe it.

"Excuse me," said the captain, "but Mr. Wilmot means to try swimming. He is willing to take a packet of letters."

Every man of them started up and reached for pen and paper.

ELEANOR DAYTON

When Tom had finished his letter he went back to the captain's cabin; stripped; rubbed himself hard in oil, rubbed it into every pore of his skin; was strapped into a life-preserver; and then went up on deck. The others were already there. A little oil-skin packet was tied firmly to the strap of the life-preserver.

Tom shook hands all around, but only the captain spoke.

"Good luck," said he.

Tom wrung his hand for answer. He stepped away from them and swung himself upon the rail. Far in the distance he could just see the cliffs of Ushant. Between, lay miles of angry sea.

He forgot where he was; forgot the men, the ship; forgot everything but his purpose.

"Lord Christ," he cried aloud, "let me see her once, just once."

Then he sprang into the sea.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE LIFE EVERLASTING

AT the door of a peasant's hut in the Island of Ushant two people were holding parley.

One was a gendarme. If I remember, there was just one gendarme under the second empire, to uphold Napoleon's authority throughout the island. A peasant was telling him volubly how they had found a man from the wreck, a swimmer, at the base of the cliff, insensible. Had he anything about him to identify him? Oh, yes, there was an oil-skin bag. The peasant was commanded to fetch it. He stole in softly, for monsieur, the strange gentleman, was not dead, and the good wife had hopes of him. They had forced brandy between his lips. He had revived a moment, then fallen into sleep.

"There are three Americans who crossed this morning from the mainland," said the gendarme, "and they seek for news of one Monsieur Thomas Wilmot, and—*mon Dieu!*—it is for her!—this letter bears the name of one of the three—Mademoiselle Eleanor Dayton—I have them all registered as becomes the prefecture of police. Care for your

OR DAYTON

You will have visitors within

arme and, as he had foretold,
in the hour. There were no
land but at

ELEANOR DAYTON

"Tom!"

Eleanor had cast herself on the floor beside him and lifted his head. He had just strength enough to put his arms about her neck. He was so weak that the tears flooded his eyes and his voice failed.

"I love you, Tom," she whispered.

He burst out sobbing and laughing like a baby. Then with an effort he uttered: "I am a fool."

Eleanor laughed.

"You old dear!" said she, as he laid his head on her shoulder. She stroked his hair softly. Only a few moments since she had wanted to cry herself, but Tom's collapse had made a new girl of her.

"Eleanor," said he, turning himself slightly, despite the pain, "I wrote you a letter——"

"I know, dear. I have it."

"And it is all true."

"Yes, Tom, yes. We love each other. We understand. It's for ever and ever. Nothing can separate us—nothing."

"I knew God would let me see you again," he moaned. "I was such a fool two years ago."

"Don't think of that now, my own," whispered Eleanor.

"And Nell," went on Tom, struggling for every word, "you remember, the night of your ball, you

ELEANOR DAYTON

asked me to apologize for judging you, because you danced with Carroll and not with me——”

“Oh, dear; don’t! don’t!”

“Yes, Nell; listen. You were right. I shouldn’t have judged you. You never did anything mean in your life. I was a cad that night. I am so sorry.”

“You are my love now,” whispered Eleanor, and her eyes were wet. As Tom steadied himself against her heart, her tears returned. She shook them off.

“I am going to pull through, Nell, for your sake,” said he, and his face turned grim. “I will, Nell. You believe I will, don’t you?”

“Yes, dearest,” she told him, though her head gave her the lie. “There are doctors down here from Paris. One will be here soon. Aunt Eliza will bring him. He had to wait a little. There are others before you, dear.”

Tom groaned.

“Poor devils!” he murmured. And then: “Have you heard of the captain?”

Eleanor shook her head.

“What about the ship?”

“It disappeared about an hour ago. But you are not comfortable dear.”

She slipped down still more at her length upon the floor, and again drew his head upon her shoulder. His cheek touched hers.

ELEANOR DAYTON

"Nell," he said softly, "I don't care a fig for dying except on your account."

"But you won't die, darling."

"Of course I won't. I have you now. I am answerable for you. Who's that?"

The doctor and Miss Eliza came into the hut. Colonel Mallon came and stood in the door. Eleanor did not change her position.

The doctor knelt down, examined him, asked a few questions, gave directions, and then said: "First of all he must sleep, and you must be content, mademoiselle, to sit beside him."

Eleanor raised herself, gently lowered his head, bent quickly and kissed him. He smiled into her face.

The doctor handed her a potion. "Drink it, dear," said she.

Tom's eyes devoured hers and for a moment stayed perfectly still. Then a wild light leaped into them. He was holding her hand, and he gripped it convulsively.

"We do love each other, Nellie."

"For ever and ever, dearest—in this life and the next."

During a moment longer Tom's eyes dwelt on hers with that same look of inexpressible hunger. Then for one moment he had his old strength, or

ELEANOR DAYTON

seemed to have. He raised himself up, caught her in his arms and strained her to his heart. He broke out into a cheery laugh.

"I'll take care of you, always, dearest," he cried out in his usual splendid tones. "You'll never——"

But there his voice failed, the room swam and he dropped back insensible. Miss Eliza came quickly to Eleanor's side, knelt down and put an arm about her. The doctor had dropped to his knee again on the other side of Tom, and had his finger on the pulse. Colonel Mallon was bending over him.

"Is there a chance?" said the old soldier.

The doctor shook his head.

CHAPTER XXVII

HOW CARROLL FOUND HIMSELF

IT is another summer morning. Three years have passed since that bitter hour in the peasant's hut on Ushant.

Great things have happened since then. One need but to give the date of this other morning in order to tell the tale. It is the third of June, eighteen hundred and sixty-three.

Enfield Dayton and Olivia and Miss Eliza are at breakfast in the Dayton house at Cincinnati. Five years have passed since we first saw Olivia Dayton. She is a child no more. She is a dainty, slight girl of eighteen, and we notice that she wears black. It is the sign of the times. Her father was killed at Antietam.

"We do not claim," says the greatest Modern in a matchless chapter of "Vanity Fair," "to rank among the military novelists." I humbly follow suit. No military pageants will make splendid this simple tale. The course of it is like a country lane, across which, at a certain point, sweeps a thunder-storm. We who are travelling by the lane must bear up a few

ELEANOR DAYTON

moments and push on across the tract of the storm toward the peace which is beyond.

And so, though not a martial tale, this story must cross the tract of war and a few things must be explained—particularly, a fourth person who is at breakfast with those other three. It is Carroll Dayton.

When the great Civil War began, the two branches of the Daytons took opposite sides. The Cincinnatians were for the North; the Marylanders, for the South. All four of old Enfield's sons went out to the war on one side, while almost all of the Maryland cousins went out on the other. There were exceptions in both camps, but we will not discuss them, for this is not a military record. All that concerns us is the action of Carroll Dayton. And what concerns us about him is that he and his father disagreed. Sad times followed at Dayton Manor. Both father and mother pleaded, argued, commanded. Carroll would not yield. But at last he promised not to volunteer unless the cause of the Union became desperate. The first two years of the war saw him peaceably at the university, pursuing the study of law, and his mother hoped fondly that his resolution was dead. Then came spring, 1862. The Union cause reached its lowest ebb. A draft was contemplated to refill its exhausted ranks. "Now,"

ELEANOR DAYTON

thought Carroll, "my honour demands it. I gave up my inclination to please my parents. But my honour is another matter. I will go away from Maryland, go out to Ohio, and volunteer." And he went. His mother sobbed and upbraided him, but he held his own and was gentle with her. When he rode away from Dayton on his way to the West, he was probably the more unhappy of the two.

And here he is, in the family of old Enfield Dayton. Here he has been for a month. The regiment in which he is enrolled, that famous Two Hundredth Ohio, destined to such stern things, is filling up but slowly. Meanwhile Carroll is working hard, drilling each day along with other recruits, and studying the manual of arms and the book of tactics.

A plain, brave, hard-working fellow is this Carroll Dayton. Neither here nor at home has he any resemblance to that beautiful Carroll of five years ago. He is no longer the idol of Westerland County. They know him there, now, for what he really is. He never makes a sensation now when he gallops upon a hunting-field. Some one may notice that he rides well, but who does not in a Maryland hunt. When he comes into a ballroom, there is no stir any more. "Oh, yes, that homely, pock-marked Mr. Dayton," some one may observe, and that is all. At dinner he is no longer the golden youth near whom

ELEANOR DAYTON

people wish to be. He is not called on for speeches, nor does that after-dinner toleration, which arises out of full glasses, like Venus from the froth of the sea, make much of his remarks. He is no wit, and now, somehow, Westerland County can see that he is not. "Odd, that he once fooled us so," people have said. And others have added: "It must have been that shrewd little mother of his."

But Carroll has come to land in spite of his fall into deep waters. Westerland County may think what it pleases. At the university his professors have all one verdict. "He is not brilliant," they say, "but of good mind, as patient and hard-working as a man can be, and simple-hearted and generous as a boy."

Such is the man who studies tactics, these June days, in Cincinnati. In that study he has a companion. And who, pray, may that be? Why, none other than the slight, dainty girl of eighteen, with lovely, grave eyes, his cousin Olivia. Many an hour they have spent together in the morning parlour going over that stupid book.

Olivia is the school-mistress hearing Carroll's lessons. Carroll says it is dull work. Sometimes when he says that at breakfast, Miss Eliza looks at her plate and smiles. Sometimes she will say: "Do you find it dull, Olivia?" And then the girl will

ELEANOR DAYTON

reply, smiling: "Oh, no, aunty, I am kept busy making sure Carroll has the rules right, and he generally hasn't, you know."

"I'll never learn the stupid things," says Carroll and attacks his breakfast.

Carroll is not especially observant. He does not notice how wistfully those grave young eyes of Olivia's sometimes linger on his. Remember, it's a month now during which they have been constant companions. They have read together, walked together, gone for long rides together, talked out their hearts to each other. Carroll has told Olivia, far more fully than he has told the others, the sad story of his disagreement with his father and mother.

"But it involved my honour," he would say, "and now, when the Union needs every man it can possibly raise, I think it is my duty to volunteer. Don't you, Olivia."

"Yes, Carroll, it is your duty. But it is so hard on your poor mother."

"O Lord!" cried simple-hearted Carroll, starting up and pacing the room. "Don't I feel that? Wouldn't I give anything under heaven to prevent it? Mother is such a dear. She is foolish about me, but I've hurt her deeply."

Olivia looked down and said nothing. Her father

ELEANOR DAYTON

had died for his country; Carroll had wrenched his heart almost in two for the same cause; and what was she, what was Olivia Dayton doing? Was she in the same key with these others. She lifted her eyes quickly and saw Carroll gazing at her. His eyes leaped away and his face flamed. Olivia's eyes leaped away likewise and her heart quickened. I am not saying how much of her feeling was pure patriotism.

Often their eyes played the coward in this fashion during that month at the Dayton house. I repeat that Carroll, at least, saw no significance—that is to say, not outside himself. Of a certain turmoil within him he had been aware since the day he arrived. It was partly to hide his confusion that he threw himself, at times, on the lessons in tactics with a zeal that made Olivia smile. For, with all the gravity of her eyes, Olivia was extremely keen.

That morning of the third of June has no significance in the history of the great war—though, on the second thought, perhaps it has—but in the lives of Carroll and Olivia it counts for much. Breakfast was over, prayers over, the lesson in tactics also done with, and they were standing at a window of the morning parlour.

"If we don't get a couple of hundred men in the next few days," said Carroll, "I don't know what

ELEANOR DAYTON

we shall do. It would be such a shame if the Government had to resort to a draft."

Olivia flashed.

"If I were only a man!" she exclaimed.

Carroll blushed and he came near saying something, but, as we know, he was never an adept at speeches.

"If the women could only be soldiers," went on Olivia, "there'd be no talk about a draft."

"No," said Carroll, looking at her slight, brave figure with reverent eyes, and saying inwardly: "What a dear little thing you are! What a spirit you have!"

"Look at those men," she continued, pointing to a group of Irishmen who were mending the street before the Dayton gate, "why aren't they soldiers?"

"Olivia," said Carroll, with conviction, "why don't you go down and ask them?"

She glanced at him, and the light in their eyes mingled an instant.

"Do you think it would do any good?" said she, looking back to the street.

"Of course it would, Olivia. How could they refuse you?"

She tossed her head and laughed—not quite steadily.

ELEANOR DAYTON

"I am making a goose of myself," said she, "but come on."

As they walked along the stone flags toward the gate, the girl's heart began to pound and she whispered: "Oh, but Carroll, I don't know what to say. You must speak to them."

"I'll open the ball," said he, laughing. "You use your eyes and come in strong at the end—like reserves in a battle."

"I feel like a fool already," said Olivia. Then her colour flashed and she gave a defiant little shake of her head. "But I won't turn tail," she added.

By now they were at the gate, whose great iron leaves were standing open. Carroll stepped through them and said quietly: "My men!"

It was a low voice, but it rang. Carroll's heart was in his cause, and he was desperately in earnest. Every one out of fourteen labourers turned and looked at him.

"My men," said he, "this lady has something to say to you. But, first, let me say a word. I am a member of the new regiment, the Two Hundredth Ohio. I am going about seeing whom I can persuade to enlist. This is as much your country as it is mine. To keep it one and a nation should mean as much to you as to me. Are there

ELEANOR DAYTON

any men who will stand forth and be my comrades?"

A red-haired Hercules grinned at him.

"Faith," said he, "did ye say ye were going about, sir? I've heard of some one in Scripture going about seeking whom he may devour." Then he caught Olivia's eye and his manner changed. "I beg your pardon, ma'am," said he with the Celt's intuitive delicacy.

She did not answer.

"You take an unfair advantage of me, by a mere play on words," said Carroll.

"You are quite right, sir," said Michael O'Hagan. "For the honour of Ireland I'm ashamed of giving such a reception to an honourable proposition to hit heads. What do ye say, boys? Do any of us want to take the gentleman up and go to fighting?"

A bent man, leaning on a spade, lifted a soured, hard face and spoke bitterly:

"It's all very good for the likes of you, sir. You can talk easily about dying, for you get the glory, and this country you serve is yours to enjoy. But we who are mere serfs have all the suffering and none of the reward. I'll make a fair exchange, sir. I've a child sick of scarlet fever and there's no one to nurse it. I'm too poor to hire expensive nurses

ELEANOR DAYTON

who will risk their lives. If I should volunteer and take my chance of dying for your country, will some member of your class come and nurse my child? Will the lady there do it?"

"Ye coward," roared O'Hagan.

"Shame on ye, Pat," said another.

Carroll stared aghast. He felt a sudden, dreadful sinking of the heart, a stifling intuition of what Olivia would do.

He was still looking helplessly before him, the sneering smile on the face of his inquisitor dancing across his eyes, when a voice in his ears shook his world to pieces.

"If you will give me your word to volunteer," said the voice, "I will go this afternoon and take charge of your child."

"Do you mean that, ma'am?"

It was the cry of one suddenly reprieved from despair.

"Yes, I mean it. I am a soldier's daughter and I will keep my word."

There was a moment of silence in which Carroll recovered himself. He faced about to find Olivia and the soured old Irishman looking straight into each other's eyes.

O'Hagan gazed at the girl with all an Irishman's admiration, that innate chivalry as great in the Celtic

ELEANOR DAYTON

labourer as in the Celtic nobleman. Carroll took a quick step forward.

"Olivia, you must not," he cried. "This is criminal."

She turned toward him with a look full of sweetness, but with eyes so resolute that his heart smote him, foreseeing the end. But he floundered on desperately.

"This is not your sphere, Olivia. If the man won't volunteer from love of his country, he is not worth having. You must not think of this."

"You are right, sir," said O'Hagan. "It is not the lady's business."

None the less there was a strange look of expectancy in the Irishman's eyes.

"I have given my word," said Olivia quickly. "I cannot be a soldier myself, but if, by exchanging my danger against his, I can purchase a soldier, I am ready. Will you keep your word?"

"By the love of Mary, that I will," said the labourer.

Carroll strode to her side and caught her hand. "For my sake, Olivia—don't you know I love you?—you won't do this."

She looked up at him, her eyes shining deeply, though full of tears.

"Think of you and your mother, dear."

ELEANOR DAYTON

Carroll dropped her hand with a groan. He was stunned. He scarcely heard Olivia's "Where do you live?" But he did hear O'Hagan's jubilant "You really mean to do it, ma'am?"

"You seem to think I am not to be trusted," said Olivia, smiling.

"Not a bit, ma'am," cried Michael O'Hagan. "By the love of Our Lady! Boys, that gives the United States fourteen soldiers—do you understand? If there's a mother's son of ye that holds back, by Saint Patrick he gets brained with this pick-axe! Fling your tools down and come along."

Not an Irishman held back.

CHAPTER XXVIII

OLIVIA

THE Irishmen were gone and Carroll and Olivia, standing in the Dayton gateway, were looking at each other with startled eyes. They were seeing a new heaven and a new earth and new creatures that walked therein.

"Are you sure you must go, Olivia?" said Carroll.

"Yes, dear. I can't retreat. I am doing no more than you are."

"Oh, but that's different," said Carroll. "We expect it of a man."

She slipped her hand into his, looking up shyly into his face. He turned away, for a moment, to steady himself. Then his eyes returned to hers and the lovers smiled to each other, though their eyes were full. They walked back to the house slowly, without speaking.

They were still silent when they came again into the morning parlour. Suddenly Olivia drew away her hand, and, raising on tiptoe, flung her arms about Carroll's neck. "Don't worry about me, dear. I am not worrying about you. It is going to be well

ELEANOR DAYTON

with us. I won't catch the fever. You won't be killed. I know it. I know it. Do you hear?"

Carroll picked her up in his arms.

"I'll try," said he.

"You must."

She kept one arm about his neck and with the other hand smoothed his hair. She had the air of one who is absolutely secure in her own convictions. She showed the courage of a woman, the sweet simplicity of a child. Looking into her eyes, Carroll seemed to behold, as by the lifting of a veil, a new world of spiritual possibility. What shone in her eyes came forth and enfolded him, making him glorious like a spirit, even as the light of the dawn enfolds and transforms this earth.

"I have been seeking you all these years," said Carroll, "and I didn't know it till I came here, a month ago. But for a long while now I have been so restless, and always I was thinking about women. I saw lots of them, some beautiful, and some clever, and some both. But no real woman I saw had any charm for me. It was some other in my heart that I wanted to find. And the moment I set foot in this house again and looked up and saw you coming along the hall, I knew."

Olivia dimpled, blushing, and broke into low laughter. She drooped upon Carroll's shoulder and

ELEANOR DAYTON

whispered: "Set me down, dear—somebody might come—and then I'll tell you something."

He carried her to a chair, placed her in it and knelt beside her.

"Do you remember that day"—she laughed a happy little laugh like a child's—"when you came back from the wood, after the small-pox, and I met you in that very hall, just the way we did a month ago?"

Carroll nodded.

"Well, a little goose of a girl looked at you and saw that all your beauty was gone, and then she looked around and saw that everybody else saw it, and that everybody else was trying not to show that they saw, and somehow, though she was such a child, her heart told her all it meant, and the next minute she ran away and up to her room to keep from crying."

Carroll laughed as he kissed her.

"You little dear!"

For a moment they were silent.

"Can you guess when she first found out what had happened to her?" said Olivia.

Carroll shook his head.

"Of course, it was not then. All the little one knew was that she was so sorry for you. The next summer she hoped you would come out to see us,

ELEANOR DAYTON

and she cried a little by herself when you didn't. But still she never dreamed what had happened. The next summer after that, when Eleanor came home without Tom, and she looked so sad and so beautiful, and was so brave, I almost found it out, but not quite. But two years ago, when father marched away"—she hid her face upon Carroll's shoulder, but went on speaking—"and they were all wondering what you and your father would do, then, all of a sudden, I found out. Now don't say that is just a little girl's fancy, for it isn't. It's all true."

The last thing Carroll could have wished to do was to doubt it, and she knew that as well as he.

"And now, dear," said she, at last, after a long, fond talk, "I am going to get my things and quietly slip out and go away. Go to the door with me, and then you will come back and tell aunty. And, Carroll, you are going to stand firm and don't lose faith. I know it is well with us. We won't"—her voice trembled—"we won't be like Tom and Eleanor. I know we won't. You will have faith?"

There was no gainsaying this heroic child.

Carroll rose up and lifted her again in his arms and promised.

CHAPTER XXIX

MISS DAYTON'S OWN

THE next day the story was all over town. A practical result of Olivia's gallantry was the flocking of Irishmen to the recruiting station. O'Hagan had gone up and down his section, telling the story and telling it over again, with Celtic enthusiasm. The Celtic chivalry flashed up, like a flame out of embers, in the sordid quarter of town where O'Hagan lived. A hundred Irishmen volunteered that day.

On the day following, a grave, handsome man, in ecclesiastical garb, called on the gallant old soldier who was raising the regiment.

"This is Colonel Carson, who is recruiting the new regiment?" said the visitor.

"The same, sir. At your service."

"I am Terence Kavanaugh, the priest of St. Patrick's. My Irishmen are eager to serve under you, Colonel Carson."

The grey old soldier, who had been in service forty years, laughed heartily.

"I am afraid, Father Kavanaugh, it is the old, old

ELEANOR DAYTON

story. Most things go to the tune of 'The lassies, oh.' I have heard the name your Irishmen give my regiment."

"They have the European tradition in the naming of regiments. 'Miss Dayton's Own' is as good a name as some princess's own, and I trust you are not jealous."

"I assure you I am not the least jealous," said Colonel Carson. "On the contrary, I am quite ready to have you christen us as 'Miss Dayton's Own,' with all the formalities of the church."

The priest inclined his head with just the least touch of condescension.

"I have come to see you upon practically that point. You still need several hundred men, do you not?"

"Between two and three hundred."

"Well, sir, you know my Irishmen. They are an unruly lot, and they can't get it out of their heads that all creation is Donnybrook Fair. Between ourselves" — with a charming half-ironical smile — "it were a blessing to Cincinnati if we could march them out of town. You see my drift. My whole congregation, with the Irish passion for Mariolatry, for the visible symbol, is ready to-day to kiss the hem of her garment. They have made a proposition to me which I bear to you. If you will

ELEANOR DAYTON

let 'Miss Dayton's Own' go out before the world as a Catholic and Irish regiment, with myself as chaplain, they will fill its quota in twenty-four hours."

"Done, sir," cried Colonel Carson. "A few bigoted Protestants may make trouble, but I'll simply release them and you'll fill their places with Irishmen."

Father Kavanaugh threw up his hands and laughed gleefully.

"Ah, my dear sir! Just let it be known that you want my knaves for that reason, and I'll get you an army corps."

And so the famous Two Hundredth Ohio, destined to such a terrible fate, became that Irish and Catholic regiment known as "Miss Dayton's Own."

Five days after Olivia took her risk, "Miss Dayton's Own" was at full quota, and the War Department had accepted it for service.

The day before they were accepted they balloted, company by company, for captains and lieutenants, and Carroll Dayton found himself a captain. The fourteen men to whom he had spoken at the gate had all enlisted in one company and had begged him to join them. "For the lady's sake, sir," said O'Hagan, with a twinkle in his eye, "we would like to keep ye safe."

Carroll enrolled in that company His election

ELEANOR DAYTON

was the work of O'Hagan, and Carroll, distressed as he was about Olivia, could not have escaped laughing had he heard the argument by which O'Hagan elevated him to command.

"Boys," said that Hercules, "can't you see his heart is broke about the lady. The only cure for him is work, lots and lots of work. And if Mike O'Hagan hasn't lost his eye for women, she'll find she's that way herself once he's marched away. Come, now, elect him captain and then devil the soul out of him. He'll get mad at us, but the heart of him's all right. We'll dance at their wedding yet."

CHAPTER XXX

PAST AND PRESENT

IN the days of the great war Cincinnati was a vast depot of supplies, and also an enormous hospital. The most southerly of northern cities, on a great river which was a highway into the South, it was just the place for both uses. Steamers went away from it laden with food, arms, accoutrements, ammunition. They returned bringing thousands of wounded soldiers. After every western battle, Cincinnati prepared for the dying.

One of the military hospitals was in the charge of Sister Constantia. She was older, greyer, than when we saw her last, by Rosalie's death-bed, in Paris, but those strange calm eyes of hers had even more of their quiet unexpended authority. Her hospital was ably managed.

One of her regular nurses was the beautiful Eleanor Dayton. For more than a year she had lived in the hospital and worked there under Constantia's direction, precisely like other nurses. The only difference was that Eleanor drew no pay.

On the morning of the fourth of June, Eleanor

ELEANOR DAYTON

came into Constantia's office, a newspaper in her hand. She had just read the story of Olivia's action.

"Sister," said she, "you must let me go to her."

It was still early, only about seven o'clock, for Constantia took her hour in her office before breakfast. As she looked up at Eleanor she thought again, as so often before, that the brightest summer morning was not so beautiful as this stately grave-eyed woman. As a rule, nowadays, Eleanor was a statue of firm repose. But this morning she breathed quickly and her eyes were alight.

"What is it, my dear?" said Constantia.

"Look. It is my Cousin Olivia."

Eleanor handed her the paper.

"But Eleanor," said Constantia, when she finished reading, "I need you here. It is your duty to remain. We'll send some one else to Olivia."

Eleanor made an impatient movement. Constantia rose and put a hand on her arm.

"Gently, my dear."

"Oh, yes, sister, I know. But duty can be pushed too far. The child is my own flesh and blood, and one of the few people I really love. I must be with her in her peril, I simply must."

Constantia looked up into the eyes of her stately assistant and considered. She knew what was passing through Eleanor's mind. She thought of

ELEANOR DAYTON

the rock of Ushant and a peril which Eleanor had not shared. She thought of something in her own life, forty years before.

"Very good, dear," said she softly, "you may go."

About nine o'clock that morning Eleanor threaded her way through a clump of wretched cabins on the edge of town, to the one in which Olivia had been quarantined. The authorities had paid no heed to the case until the incident of yesterday made it public knowledge. Then in great haste they had acted. Old Pat Reilly had been seized upon and taken in hand; a placard had been put upon the house; a rigid quarantine had been ordered.

As Eleanor drew near to the cabin, she met Miss Eliza.

"Aunty, dear, what are you doing?" she cried, catching up with her.

Miss Eliza gave a little start and then turned quickly, recognising the voice.

"Why, Eleanor, what brings you here?"

"Now, aunty, there is no need for us both. You go back."

"No, my dear. You should go back. It is my place to be with the child. Please go back."

Eleanor shook her head, smiling.

"No use to argue with me, aunty. You know Constantia says I am terribly obstinate. I am going

ELEANOR DAYTON

to be with Olivia through this danger. You may stay if you want to."

Miss Eliza knew that Eleanor, nowadays, once her mind was made up, could not be dissuaded. She walked on in silence.

"Now," said Eleanor, as she rapped upon the cabin door, "let's see what Olivia says. There she comes. That's her dear little footstep."

Olivia stood on the threshold, facing them. Her lips parted and she stared. But before either could speak she had slammed the door and bolted it.

"Go away," she called. "I won't have you here—neither of you."

"But we are coming, little one," said Eleanor, laughing. "You had better open with good grace."

"You will not refuse me, Olivia," said Miss Eliza.

"Yes, I will, aunty," came back through the door. "I'll not open to either of you. Oh, please go away. It is a perfectly simple case. The doctor says I don't need any help, and you might catch it."

"How about you, goosey?" said Eleanor.

"Fiddlesticks!"

"Well, Aunt Eliza," said Eleanor, "we'll just sit down on the doorstep here, and wait till her ladyship comes to her senses."

"You'll wait all day," cried Olivia.

"It's pleasant weather," said Eleanor.

ELEANOR DAYTON

The two women sat down on the step, Eleanor having first dusted it with handfuls of grass.

"We are in for a good long wait, I suppose," said she.

"Olivia does not yield easily," said Miss Eliza.

Pat Reilly's cabin faced the west, and the shadow of it, when they sat down, still pointed straight away from them. They saw the shadow swing around, slowly, pointing farther and farther toward the north, and finally disappear behind them. All that time not a person did they see. Apparently the neighbourhood was deserted. The shining hush of the clear June day filled with golden stillness the neglected garden and the lonely road.

Now and then they heard Olivia come to the door and listen. Generally one or the other spoke to her. But she seldom answered.

It was after one of these unsuccessful attempts that Eleanor said: "What is behind this, aunty?"

Miss Eliza had been gazing straight in front of her without seeing things. She recovered herself with an effort.

"Oh, what did you say, Eleanor?"

"What does this mean, this whim of Olivia's? What put it into her head?"

Miss Eliza smiled.

"Have you forgotten Carroll?"

ELEANOR DAYTON

"Oh, dear," said Eleanor. "What is going to happen, aunty?"

"Who can tell."

They sat silent for some while, and the shadow swung farther to the north. Happening to turn suddenly, Eleanor saw that her aunt had been watching her. Miss Eliza looked aside and flushed.

Eleanor took hold of the delicate old hand that was like faded and crumpled rose-leaves.

"What was it, aunty?" said she.

"I was only thinking how beautiful you are, dear," said Miss Eliza sadly, without looking up.

Eleanor caressed the old woman's hand.

"You have no fear of telling me I am beautiful now, dearest, have you?"

Miss Eliza shook her head.

"Do you remember our visit to Dayton?" said Eleanor. "That seems so long ago to me. There is something wrong with the calendar, for I am sure I have lived a hundred years since then. What a horrid creature Mary Carroll must have been!"

"We won't judge her," said Miss Eliza. "But, my dear, no words can express the pride I take in the way you have stood up to your trouble."

"I had you for a model, aunty."

Miss Eliza leaned her head on her hand.

"Say rather a warning, Eleanor."

ELEANOR DAYTON

"That night at sea," went on Eleanor, "when you told me your story, was the point when I turned about. I was very near to letting go and forgetting all I had promised Rosalie and everything. But, somehow, I got a new hold on myself that night. You have had such a sad life, dear."

"Never mind me," said Miss Eliza. "I brought all my troubles on myself. I was a silly, sentimental girl with a lot of selfishness thrown in. But I learned my lesson. That is why I was so anxious about you."

"And I have learned mine," mused Eleanor. "We will grow old together, won't we, dear, and I won't ever forget now the things I promised Rosalie on her death-bed. We can be such good friends now, you and I."

She put an arm around Miss Eliza and the old woman leaned her head on the girl's shoulder.

"Yes, Eleanor, we can be such good friends. We have so much in common."

"What stabs me, now and then," said Eleanor, "is the thought that perhaps Olivia must be the third. You and I and Olivia! There seems to be a fatality over our family. So many of us have either died young or lived to be unhappy. But some of us must be exceptions, aunty."

"It is the unexpected that happens, as we say so

ELEANOR DAYTON

often. Who would have suspected that Tom would be taken. Perhaps Carroll will be spared, soldier though he is."

"Suppose Olivia comes out of this contagion unharmed and then Carroll dies," said Eleanor. "Can the child bear up? Or is she a pagan, as I was?"

"No, dear, you and I were both pagans once—we saw only the earthly shapes of things—but Olivia is not. I have no fear for her except in the acuteness of her sorrow. This is the kind that suffers deep in silence."

Eleanor was suddenly conscious of footsteps stealing softly from the door. How much had Olivia heard?

"Look," said Eleanor, "the shadow is clear around. It must be noon."

She rose and pounded on the door.

"Well," said Olivia's voice.

"We are so hungry, midget; do let us in."

Olivia laughed.

"You think I am dreadfully simple," came the voice through the door.

"You are very selfish," said Eleanor. "When Dr. Judson comes you must open whether you want to or not. Why not now? You are merely tiring us out for nothing."



ELEANOR DAYTON

"I won't open," said Olivia, and her footsteps went back into the cabin.

Eleanor sat down again by her aunt.

"Is it stubbornness or consecration?" asked Eleanor.

"Both, and yet neither. It's chiefly just Olivia," said Miss Eliza.

Again the two women drifted into talk about themselves. The aunt and niece had not had a long talk together since one night at sea, after Tom's death, when Eleanor was near to being ready to curse God and die. For a long time afterward Eleanor could not speak out. For a year now she had been occupied by the hospital and had seen Miss Eliza seldom, and then only in snatches.

"I have been reading 'In Memoriam,'" said she. "Devouring it. Aunty, I am so glad I came upon it. I was beginning to think that no Protestant had the power to believe that those Catholics have—that Rosalie had—that Constantia has. But this poem is as brave as they. It brings me back to my moorings."

"I don't want you to go over to Rome, Eleanor," said Miss Eliza. "I hope you won't."

"No fear, aunty. I have gradually gotten myself settled, and I'll be just where I am now all the rest of my days."

"There are Protestants who have just as much

ELEANOR DAYTON

power to believe as any Catholic has; to whom the soul is just as real and the world to come just as certain. Dear child"—the old woman lifted her face and spoke with trembling eagerness—"if I didn't believe I was to have another chance, that I should yet undo all the harm I did once, do you think I could bear to stay alive? Oh, I haven't any argument, but I know it. The dead live and we shall meet them and our sins shall be forgiven us."

Eleanor repeated low:

"Eternal form shall still divide
The eternal soul from all beside,
And I shall know thee when we meet."

"Hi! What's that?" said a strident voice. "Quoting poetry to each other this fine afternoon. So she won't let you in, eh?"

Dr. Judson, with his thumbs in his waistcoat pockets, was looking down at them.

"I met Enfield and he told me about it, Miss Eliza," he went on. "And I fully approve. As to Eleanor, we have all learned to stand aside and let her have her way, and I won't be an exception."

"You were always such a wise man, doctor," said Eleanor, who had quickly thrown off the intense and dreamy expression of a moment ago.

"Now for that little piece of obstinacy," said Dr. Judson.

ELEANOR DAYTON

He rapped loud.

"Who's there?" came the voice through the door.

"Ephraim Judson," roared the old doctor. "Also Miss Eliza Dayton. Also Miss Eleanor Dayton. We are all three coming in. Open this door, quick."

"I will open for you, doctor."

"You will, will you!" Dr. Judson chuckled. "How condescending you are! But I am afraid, Olivia, you won't."

He put his shoulder against the door, braced his foot into an angle of the frame and put forth his strength. He had been a giant in his youth. Old man as he was, he was still powerful. The door creaked, groaned, began to snap and then was burst open. Door and man rolled together at Olivia's feet.

Eleanor sprang through the doorway and caught Olivia in her arms.

"You dear little rogue!" she cried. "I have you now."

Miss Eliza stepped up and kissed her.

Olivia threw her arms about her aunt's neck and whispered: "I am so glad you are here, aunty, but I had to do all I could to keep you out, you know."

In Eleanor's ears, despite her external calm, the great lines of the poem still pealed.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE MAILED FIST

THE regiment had been organized at a camp of instruction to the north of the city. Immediately afterward it was ordered to proceed to Louisville, to a much larger camp of instruction, and thence, as soon as it was fit, to go to the front and join the Army of the Cumberland.

While Olivia was still in quarantine and Carroll dared not let himself think, the regiment marched through town. It was reviewed in the little park before the city hall, which is now lost beneath cut-stone. Speeches were made. A flag was presented by Enfield Dayton. Then every head was bared while the Archbishop of Cincinnati blessed the regiment and invoked God's aid through the coming peril. Little did any one suspect how great that peril was to be; how appalling the end of the chapter.

The regiment marched out Eighth Street, down Vine, out Fourth, and down Broadway to the levee. Strict order was not maintained. Many women walked in the ranks beside their husbands. Children

ELEANOR DAYTON

trotted along holding their fathers' hands. On the colonel's saddle-bow sat his little grandson, a golden-haired rogue unterrified by the crowds. The colonel's arms were filled by bunches of flowers so that he could hardly hold his rein. And every little while some one ran out from the crowd along the sidewalk and held up more flowers. Continually he saluted with his sword the cheering crowds. From a thousand windows handfuls of flowers were flung out upon the volunteers marching steadily past, their slant bayonets glittering in the sunshine. Every house was hung with bunting. Immense flags were stretched across the way, high over head, so that all along Vine Street the column marched under cover of the red, white, and blue, where the filtered sunshine was like a prism. And every moment of the march, above all the booming of the drums, above the clangour of the trumpets, rose the steady roar of the cheering.

Three steamers lay at the wharf to receive them. As the boats moved away, the soldiers lined the rails, shouting and waving their caps, and the vast crowd on the levee lifted up the song:

"The star-spangled banner, oh long shall it wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave."

CHAPTER XXXII

WHEN MAN IS NOT ALONE

CARROLL DAYTON lay upon his back beside a camp-fire. A September night, full of twinkling, windy stars arched above him. All about him lay sleeping men. At the limit of his vision a sentry walked to and fro silhouetted against the sky.

The long summer, full of work that racked his body, had been relieved by a happiness that gave wings to his spirit. For Olivia had not taken the fever. Now she was at home again. All summer she and Carroll had poured out their hearts in letters.

Carroll looked up at the stars, thinking. There could be little doubt that to-morrow the regiment would smell powder. It would be his first battle. A hundred and fifty thousand men in a tangle of mountains were feeling for each other's throats, and now they knew where they were. This windy September night was the eve of the dreadful battle of Chickamauga.

"I wonder," thought Carroll, and he shuddered. Before lying down he had written to Olivia. The

ELEANOR DAYTON

latter had been given, as most such letters were, to a camp servant who would be out of fire during the battle. But as Carroll lay and looked at the stars, the thought of that letter troubled him.

"I wonder," he repeated, "what the chances are for not getting hit. But suppose I was knocked over. And suppose that by any chance she should not get that letter."

He put his hand over his eyes and bit his lip.

"Olivia, my own!" he whispered to himself.

For a while longer he lay still.

"I can't stand this," said he suddenly. "I'm going to see to those letters myself."

He got up, routed out the servant, and examined the bag of letters, to make sure that his own was still there. Then he sought the colonel.

White-haired old Colonel Carson was lying on the ground, as were all his men, with no added luxury but a saddle for a pillow. The Two Hundredth being an infantry regiment, Carroll sought the colonel to borrow his second horse.

"Hello," said the colonel, turning on his side, "that you, Carroll?"

"Yes, sir. Don't you think, colonel, I might ride back to a post-office to-night. I'll return long before we march."

Colonel Carson sat up and smiled.



ELEANOR DAYTON

"What's her name, and where's her home," he hummed. "But I needn't ask. It's Olivia. All the regiment knows."

Carroll blushed.

"You won't deny it to-night, will you?"

"No, sir," said Carroll.

"My boy," said the colonel slyly, "let me ask a question. To-morrow we will engage the enemy in force. The battle will be of great moment to your country. I suppose you are wakeful to-night, because you are thinking about the duties of your command."

The colonel's humour was not always light, but it always made him laugh. Carroll laughed with him. To-night, in the shadow of his first battle, the young captain had no reserves.

"I am thinking about Olivia, and not a thing besides," said he.

Colonel Carson laughed gleefully.

"Carroll," said he, "nearly forty years ago I was where you are now. I wrote a letter, just as you have—that is, as I suppose you have. And it wasn't to my grandmother either. And to-night I wrote another. It's in the bag there. That's the bag, isn't it?"

"Yes, sir. Here is the letter-bag."

"Can you guess to whom I wrote it."

ELEANOR DAYTON

"I think so, sir."

"The same dear girl, God bless her! We've been married for seven-and-thirty years."

The colonel rose up, a fine, sedate old soldier, and shook Carroll's hand.

"God be with you both, my boy," said he. "May you have as good luck in life as I have had. Thirty-seven years of solid happiness, my lad. The Lord has dealt well by me, hasn't He?"

A few moments later Carroll was mounted on one of the colonel's horses and galloping along a mountain road toward the northwest.

Several hours later he came back. The mountains loomed about him and the stars seemed close above him. Streaks of dawn were in the sky. The distance shone. The road beneath his horse's hoofs flowed toward him out of violet dusk. He was not crowding his horse. They topped the swells of the road, or stooped into the valleys, going leisurely, with the dawn wind fresh in their faces. But Carroll Dayton was never able to give a clear account of what roads he took, what country he passed through, on that ride to the post the night before Chickamauga.

What was Carroll thinking of? Not his country; not his office as a soldier; not the battle; not his home; not his father and mother even, much as he

ELEANOR DAYTON

loved them; not life, nor death, nor the things that yet might be. He was riding in a dream. On the pommel of his saddle he held a girl; her arms were about him, her head was on his shoulder.

"Halt!"

It was the voice of O'Hagan standing sentry.

The girl laughed brightly, and leaped out of Carroll's arms. The dawn was coming swiftly across the mountains. High, shrill, imperious, thrilled a bugle.

"Make haste, sir," said O'Hagan, "if I may venture to say so. The report is that the enemy is already on the move. 'Miss Dayton's Own' must win its spurs this day."

"We'll do that, Mike," said Carroll.

That was the last talk he ever had with Michael O'Hagan. When the regiment took the road in the red light of the dawn their drums were answered by others, to left and right, before and behind them. Thousands upon thousands of brave men, obedient to a distant will, like the pieces of a Titanic chess game, thronged the mountain roads and moved toward they knew not what. It was the soldier's demonstration that action is faith. On they went, choking the valleys, pouring over the ridges, drums answering to drums, bugles rollicking in air, flags flapping in the sunshine, horse, foot, and cannon.

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE TREMBLING SCALE

THERE was a great cloud over all the Dayton family, those two September days while the battle raged. Carroll was not the only one who was at the front. The third son of old Enfield, Captain William Dayton, was on the staff of that brilliant Cincinnati, General Lytle.

"And that means he'll be in the thickest of it," said his father. "May God pity us this day."

Two others of his sons had already gone down in battle. There was David at Antietam and James at Chancellorsville. Must William go too?

But the three women, though they thought of William, thought more of another. Eleanor left her hospital those two days and spent every moment of the time with Olivia.

"You are brave as steel, dearie," she whispered, one time when they were walking up and down the hall together, Olivia's arm about her waist, her own arm on Olivia's shoulder. Olivia's little figure was trembling and she was dead white, but her eyes were dry.

ELEANOR DAYTON

"I know he won't die, I know it," murmured Olivia, though her voice faltered.

"That is right, dear; don't let yourself waver—not for a minute."

Every few moments they received a bulletin sent over from the "Chronicle," a newspaper of which Mr. Dayton was part owner. In these despatches the battle ebbed and flowed before their eyes. More than once Olivia clung to Eleanor and cried out in a trembling voice that she still kept her faith. And always Eleanor was as a tower of strength.

"If I had wanted to give up," said Olivia, afterward, "you wouldn't have let me."

Neither of them slept that night. The next day was worse yet. By nightfall they knew that the battle was lost. And then the harrowing night which followed. In the middle of it Constantia sent for Eleanor, and Olivia went with her to the hospital.

"You must take my place, Eleanor. I am ordered by the War Department to go at once to Washington and thence probably to Chattanooga. The hospital service down there is frightful. I start at six in the morning."

"Let me stay with you, Eleanor," whispered Olivia.

"Yes, dear."

ELEANOR DAYTON

And so Eleanor took charge of the hospital, but Olivia, as we shall see, did not stay with her. Little Olivia was destined to do her share as a war nurse, but not in Cincinnati. Early next day they got the dreadful news that the Two Hundredth Ohio had been cut to pieces. Before dark that day she and Enfield Dayton were on their way to the front.

As Olivia put up her face to kiss Eleanor good-bye, the tall girl bent over and whispered: "You haven't lost heart, dearie?"

"No, no, Eleanor, I dare not."

"Telegraph if you need me. But don't let your faith waver."

The train pulled out of the depot and Eleanor and Miss Eliza went sadly home.

It was in the middle of the night that the Dayton house was awakened by the telegraph messenger. The news had come at last. Both Carroll and William were wounded; Carroll severely; William mortally. Both had just then been received at the same hospital. The messenger took back an answer, naming the hotel at which Mr. Dayton and Olivia meant to stop.



CHAPTER XXXIV

ASHES TO ASHES

FROM Cincinnati to Chattanooga, in the old days, was a tedious journey. You went west to Louisville, then south to Nashville, then east a long way to Chattanooga. Leaving Cincinnati at night, making bad connections and having long waits both at Louisville and Nashville, they did not reach Chattanooga till the morning of the second day. At their hotel, letters were awaiting them. Olivia glanced at hers and the handwriting was enough. The tears which she had kept back till now welled over, and it seemed as if her heart began to beat again, suddenly, jubilantly, after a long deadness.

Let us glance over Olivia's shoulder. But we must not read it all. It is a lover's letter full of tender turns of phrase that no eye should see but hers. Carroll wrote it while he lay in a hospital bed, and all that concerns us now is that he has escaped without mortal wounds.

Olivia looked up from her letter, tears streaming from her eyes, and met the sad gaze of her grandfather.

ELEANOR DAYTON

"I need not ask your news, my dear?" said the old man. "Come, let us have some hot coffee, and then we'll go at once to the hospital."

"How selfish I am, grandfather!" cried Olivia. "Is your news bad?"

"Your uncle is dying, Olivia. But come."

They swallowed steaming coffee, and a carriage was got ready for them. In less than five minutes they were off.

Mr. Dayton sat silent, his eyes out of the window but seeing nothing. He had found his son, the third of his sacrifices, and his heart presaged the end. He was praying for strength to bear up as he should, to make cheerful the end of the chapter.

The bright autumn morning was clearing above the town, and in the empty streets every noise sounded crisp and clean. Even the hospital, which was a rambling old mansion, seemed fresh and peaceful. Mr. Dayton drew his hand across his brow, took his breath as with great effort, stiffened himself, and became a new man. It was a quiet, cheerful, smiling old gentleman who went into the room where his son lay.

Olivia was taken to another ward.

No one would have recognised Enfield Dayton as the same man who left the hotel so shortly before. Calm, smiling, self-possessed, a hale old gentleman,

ELEANOR DAYTON

he sat by his son's cot, holding the younger man's hand and talking cheerily.

"What foolish things you boys will do! Near as I can find out, about everybody I know got hit. Isn't that so, son?"

"It was a great battle, father, and we were frightfully mishandled. Bragg is no general or he would have destroyed us."

A nurse came up and stipulated that Captain Dayton should not talk.

"What is the use of pretenses, nurse," said the captain, "I know my condition. My father has come a long way to see me, so let us talk while we may. Your son should not have any fear of dying, should he, father?"

"No Christian fears it, my boy, though it is hard to leave his loved ones. But then there is mother, and James and David. And it may be God's will that you should fight again."

But all of them knew it was not. Mr. Dayton sat with his son all that day, talking with him, at intervals, as if nothing were the matter. He read to him from the Scriptures. He was with him about seven at night when he died.

They buried William Dayton in a little country graveyard not far from the field of battle. "I want to be buried there," he had said to his father. "It is

ELEANOR DAYTON

a sin at this time to waste money and energy on the dead. Look to the living."

A portion of his regiment went to the grave. There was no dead march, for the city was gloomy enough without that. They walked in silence with arms reversed, the drums idle.

Mr. Dayton had fallen back into himself and looked years older. As he stood beside the open grave, he bowed his head and wept without restraint. Olivia at his side was also crying. But through her tears she could not help seeing Carroll's face and remembering that he would live.

"Ashes to ashes, dust to dust," said the clergyman.

Olivia timidly put out her hand and laid it on the clasped hands of her grandfather. He took it between both of his and thus they stood during the service.

After it was over, while they were driving back to the hotel, she told him that she wanted to stay there as a nurse.

"You are a brave girl, Olivia," said he, his eyes still moist. "I am glad you have so much of the family spirit."

But Olivia never used disguises. She never allowed herself to be credited with one motive when she knew of another.

ELEANOR DAYTON

"You know Carroll is here, grandpapa, and you don't forget that I am engaged to him."

Sad as he was, the old man smiled.

"That does not detract from your spirit," said he.

CHAPTER XXXV

PRO PATRIA MORI

THE wards of a hospital are no place for outsiders. While Carroll pulls slowly back toward strength, while Olivia sits beside him, or gives him his medicines, let us not intrude. Instead, let us follow the girl, some night, when she goes to her own room, and there peep across her shoulder and read again that letter which we glanced at once before. Now, as then, there are parts of it which we will discreetly fail to see. What we look for now is the story of the regiment, the fated Two Hundredth Ohio. This, somewhat clipped and simplified, is as follows:

"We got our baptism of fire the first day, and we learned that we didn't scare at the bullets. After that, we felt as if we had been soldiers always. But it was on the second day that we did our real fighting. And that, dear, was dreadful. I'll be as brief as I can, for I hate to think of it.

"We were lying in a piece of timber at the foot of the mountain, and had lain there almost all day until near sunset. Shells flew over us and wrenched and

ELEANOR DAYTON

tore the tree-trunks, but very few of us were hit, and toward five in the afternoon I happened to be standing by Colonel Carson. He had been watching for some time a ragged place a quarter of a mile away, and he seemed anxious. Once he said to me: 'That's an ugly place over there,' and I asked him: 'Why?' 'Somebody has misunderstood orders,' said he, more to himself than to me, 'somebody has been ordered to occupy that knoll and he hasn't done it.' But I didn't want to pester him with questions and so said no more. After a while he took his breath quickly, just as one does in sudden pain. 'Colonel,' said I, 'are you hit?' 'No, no,' said he, 'but we'll pay dreadfully for this.' 'For what?' said I. 'Don't you see it will fall on us to recover that knoll,' he replied. It was all Greek to me, for, so far as I could see, no enemy was near us. But the old colonel knew the ways of a battle as I know a fractious horse, as I soon found out. For, not more than half an hour had gone by, when all of a sudden that knoll swarmed with Confederates. In the twinkling of an eye it was grey with them—horse, foot, and guns. The infantry began to throw up intrenchments; the guns were wheeled into position; the cavalry came sweeping round the base of the hill as if lashing out to find an enemy. 'Just what I looked for,' cried the colonel; 'why don't they send us in

ELEANOR DAYTON

at once? In ten minutes it will be too late.' And he began wringing his hands. Just then an aid, riding the best sorrel I ever saw, came tearing through the timber. 'You are to advance instantly,' he shouted, 'and sweep that knoll free before it is occupied in force. A whole Confederate corps is pushing on to take position there. You'll be properly supported.' And then he was off again, riding like a demon.

"The whole regiment took in the situation. All of us saw that we were to be sacrificed to gain time, and for a second not a sound was heard. Then, suddenly, the voice of O'Hagan rang like a trumpet. 'Boys,' he shouted, 'the Two Hundredth Ohio must die for its country.' But the strange thing was the look on his face. He seemed to be seeing something inside his eyes, and yet to be a long way off from it. I am sure it was the look the Irishmen mean by 'fey,' the look of the man who foresees his own death. The same look was on the faces of all those men about me. It was even on the face of Father Kavanaugh. For just then the good priest sprang upon a fallen tree-trunk, and stretching forth his arms so that he looked, against the smoky red of the sunset, like a great crucifix, cried: 'My children!' That stopped everything. We turned toward the priest, and then all the Irishmen fell on their knees,

ELEANOR DAYTON

and the Protestants, from Colonel Carson down, knelt too. I could not have told, ordinarily, what the Latin words, chanted high and fine, signified. But now, somehow, I understood. As the Irishmen crossed themselves I did the same. I knew he was giving us absolution. For a moment, I was 'fey' like the rest. Then, suddenly, it passed and I was cheery, almost amused, and it was your face, Olivia dear.

"We went out of our cover, a minute after that, on the double quick, Colonel Carson leading. Father Kavanaugh, musket in hand, was beside the colours. O'Hagan carried them. We were cheering like mad, or else roaring out 'The Wearing of the Green.' I have told you already what saved me. When that bullet went through my side I dropped over and could not make another step, while away they went, straight up the hill, to their destruction. They drove back the cavalry and got the hill-top and held it for a few minutes, just long enough for the relief to come up and get the place for good. But in those ten minutes they died by companies. We are not a regiment any more, only a handful of survivors. Colonel Carson is dead. O'Hagan is dead. Father Kavanaugh is dead. They are all dead."

CHAPTER XXXVI

A GENTLEMAN OF YESTERDAY

ENFIELD DAYTON had returned to Cincinnati and was sitting by himself in his study. It was on the south side of the house, but by some freak of design had only west windows. There were two of these, of which one had been blocked up to give additional space for books. A huge secretary was built into the walls at the northwest angle, so that the front of it was even with one rim of the remaining window. A candlestick with a taper partly burnt reaffirmed the evidence of one's senses and told that books in the corners of this room were too far from the daylight. To any one entering it, the study was a high, dark, rather narrow cave, walled round with the serried backs of books, many of which showed the dingy golden brown of well-worn legal calf. One saw, at once, that it was the study of a lawyer—though, as it happens, of a lawyer who had finished his practice, who was sitting, that moment, at the great secretary, by the one window, intent not on books of law, but the Holy Scriptures.

ELEANOR DAYTON

The winter had gone by and spring was once more making bright the world. Through the study window, had the old man been in a mood to see, there was a pleasant prospect—bright green lawn; trees veiled, as it were, in films of opening verdure; a softly tinted sky. But Mr. Dayton had not eyes for these. He had come into his study and shut the door to be alone with his fate.

A few moments before a showily-dressed young man had rung the bell and asked for Mr. Dayton. The old man had received him in the drawing-room, and did not ask him to sit down.

"Well, sir," said Mr. Dayton with an eye that menaced, "be brief."

"I need hardly explain to you why I am here," said the visitor in a rude tone. "I represent Mr. Dawson, as you know. He repeats his proposition. It is your last chance, Mr. Dayton. Accept, and we'll let you down easy. Refuse, and you'll lose every cent you have in the world. That's brief enough, isn't it?"

"Get out of my house, sir!"

"Is that your answer to Mr. Dawson?"

"Tell him he's a scoundrel, dyed in the wool, and I'll fight him to the end."

"You realize what you say?"

"Get out of this house."

ELEANOR DAYTON

The old man clenched his fists and took a step forward.

"Prepare for the worst," said the other and left the room.

Mr. Dayton had gone back into his study, closed the door and did what, for him, was the most natural thing in the world; he took down his Bible.

For Enfield Dayton had been beaten in a fight which he had carried on for nearly a year. And defeat meant ruin. He knew that it did.

The fight had begun one day, when Mr. Dayton's temper, always an unruly one, got away with him. There had been talk at breakfast that morning about the way in which a certain John Dawson, an unscrupulous contractor, had been pinching the Government.

"It's a shame," said Miss Dayton, "nothing less than a shame."

"Shame!" thundered her brother, "it's a crime."

The old man wheeled about toward the table—he had been sitting sideways while he read his paper—and brought down his fist with a bang.

"If I had my way, I would hang him as high as Haman. And I'd leave him in his irons, as a sign for evil-doers, till he rotted to a skeleton. What is patriotism worth if it doesn't touch your pocket-book! We can't all of us go out and die for our country——"

ELEANOR DAYTON

His lip trembled, for had not his sons done just that——

“But at least we can all help to keep the Government going. We can give our time and labour and a little of our miserable money, if we cannot give our lives. As to this cur of a Dawson——”

“Enfield, Enfield!” exclaimed Miss Dayton.

“Don’t interrupt me, Eliza. I know I am violent, but it is not in human nature, at this time, to be otherwise. Did my boys lay down their lives just to double this Dawson’s profits? God forgive me, but it is all I can do to keep from swearing. And the wretched excuses he makes—‘He is but keeping abreast of the market.’ ‘If he fell behind, he should be a marked man, and they would ruin him.’ Who are ‘they?’”

He shook his paper as a mastiff might shake a puppy.

“Who are ‘they,’ Eliza? Just listen to this—down in cold print. The man has had the audacity to get into the paper—my own paper, too—I’ll discharge the fellow who wrote this, or my name is not Dayton.”

The cause of Mr. Dayton’s excitement was an article in the Cincinnati “Chronicle” (of which, as I believe I have mentioned, he was part owner), in which the rich cotton man, Dawson, defended his

ELEANOR DAYTON

war prices. It was what we should call, nowadays, an interview. Rather, it would have been an interview if written up in the modern way. But forty years ago the printed dialogue was not common in newspapers. This article pulled slowly along through the third person, past such expressions as "Mr. Dawson gives it as his opinion that prices are not in the control of the individual merchant." "Mr. Dawson's reasoning was somewhat like this: two considerations compel the seller to go with the market; first, if he tried to cut under it, the other sellers (the 'they' Mr. Dayton fumed about) would instantly combine and destroy him; secondly, all prices were relative; if the seller asked high prices now, it was because all his expenditures were in proportion, and, therefore, his net profit was no greater than formerly."

John Dawson was known to be a liar, and many people believed him to be a cheat. In the present case, as Mr. Dayton well knew, the facts were these: In 1861, when the bottom was knocked out of everything, the price of cottons went down in blind plunges to one-tenth, one-fifteenth, one-twentieth, of the normal; Dawson, who was too cold and shrewd to share that spasm of dismay, saw his chance; he borrowed right and left; bought cottons at next to nothing, stacked his warehouses with them and

ELEANOR DAYTON

waited; for nearly two years he had refused to sell; meanwhile, the reaction came; the enormous scale of the war had been driving prices up; cottons were now at an incredible height above their value, and just now Dawson had begun to sell. His "long suit" was a peculiarly fine quality of duck, much in demand by the Government. When all other available supplies of it had been exhausted, he doubled the previous exorbitant price and opened negotiations with the War Department.

"And that's the sort of man," said Mr. Dayton, "who is talking about a seat in Congress and spouts patriotism and prolongation of the war. The "Chronicle" will have something to say on this subject to-morrow."

"Enfield, my dear Enfield," pleaded Miss Dayton, "don't be rash."

"I won't be a jelly-fish," stormed her brother as he strode out into the hall.

A very angry old gentleman came out of the Dayton house, along the flag-stone walk and between the gates of hammered iron, that fateful morning. As he strode along, pounding on the sidewalk with his gold-headed cane, he kept muttering to himself. His engrossing thought was that his sons had died for their country and that John Dawson was making a fortune.



ELEANOR DAYTON

"The scoundrel!" he muttered; "the scoundrel! And they let him defend himself in my own paper!"

When the word buzzed about the counting-room of the "Chronicle" that "the governor" was there, the whole place became attentive. Mr. Dayton's visits were always occasions. If he came in good humour there was no telling who might be promoted before he went away. When, as now, he came in wrath, there was a general trembling. At this hour, of course, very few of the writing force were on hand, but the managing editor kept early hours and for his room Mr. Dayton headed.

"Mr. Clarkson," said the proprietor, "I want the man who wrote that article discharged."

"Won't you sit down, Mr. Dayton? I hope you won't insist on this."

"Why, sir?"

"Because, sir, it was written by my orders."

There was silence while Mr. Dayton tugged at his beard. Enfield Dayton was never so angry as not to see the obligation in honour. Mr. Clarkson had put him in a position where he disliked, equally, to go forward or back. To demand the resignation of an editor of note was more than he had prepared for. To admit that it made a difference who wrote the article seemed to him an equivocation. To debate the matter was, of all things, what he liked least.

ELEANOR DAYTON

The two men sat silent for some minutes. Mr. Clarkson was a calm man, as restrained as Mr. Dayton was excitable; his steadfast eye, which conceded nothing, looked straight into Mr. Dayton's fiery one. Neither man moved.

But the anger of Enfield Dayton was always as short-lived as it was intense. Also, he had a sense of humour. Suddenly his eyes twinkled, a smile rippled over his face, he threw back his head, and emitted a guffaw.

"Well, Clarkson, I guess you've turned the tables on me once more. You ought to know how to run the paper by this time. Peter must have a terrible score against me on the ground of lost temper. But I take it all back. Run the paper your own way."

"With all due respect, Mr. Dayton, that is what I intend to do."

"And you're right, Clarkson. I wouldn't give a fig for a man who wouldn't stand up to me—especially when I'm wrong. But now tell me frankly, why did you print that defence of Dawson?"

"Do you call it a defence?"

"He does the best he can."

"He has hanged himself with his own rope. Here's an editorial I'm writing for to-morrow's paper. I prove that Dawson lies; I tell just where, when, and of whom he bought his cottons; I show



ELEANOR DAYTON

that he will net on his duck, alone, eighty-three thousand dollars, clear profit."

"Go it, Clarkson," cried the proprietor, "don't spare him."

"My brother died at Antietam, Mr. Dayton."

The old man stretched forth his hand.

"And there were my boys," said he.

From that day forward the "Chronicle" waged war on the contractors generally; on John Dawson particularly. Many an ugly fraud it unearthed and exposed. Many a dollar was saved to the Government by its untiring labours. Many a consignment of supplies was sent back to Dawson, because of evidence supplied by the "Chronicle." John Dawson, being what he was, did after his kind and put his powers in operation.

Meanwhile occurred the battle of Chickamauga and the death of William Dayton. Old Enfield came back to Cincinnati more relentless than ever. "Beat Dawson to the earth," was his order to Clarkson. "The man is a vampire. He is sucking the life-blood of the State. He shall go down if it ruins the paper."

Dawson replied with libel suits. Mr. Dayton merely laughed at them and the war went on. In November a scandal was unearthed that just missed sending Dawson to prison. The fraud was so

ELEANOR DAYTON

colossal. But one link in the evidence was missing and by that Dawson saved himself.

"But it was a dreadful close shave," said he to his confidential man. "We must stop that paper if it costs a fortune."

He was standing in his warehouse, one of the biggest, busiest, and dirtiest in the city. Gangs of negroes ran up and down stairs; an endless chain of them clattered in and out carrying bags or bales; drays bringing new consignments from the steamers rattled up and their drivers clamoured to be unladen; other drays were being laden, at other doors of the warehouse, with equal to-do; it was hurry, noise and dust everywhere. In the midst of it all stood the master. He was a bull of a man, so broad in the shoulder, so deep in the chest, that, though of middle height, he seemed almost squat. His form and his face went together. His chin was lost in a swinish throat on which the flesh rolled loosely; he had a great sleek, flattened lower lip beneath a stubby gray mustache; flattened nostrils; heavy bagging eyelids that winked continually, half concealing the lustreless grey eyes. A coarse, hard old satyr, but of consummate ability.

He blinked a while from under those heavy eyelids and then he outlined a plan of campaign.

During the next two months Mr. Dayton suspected



ELEANOR DAYTON

nothing. But if he had been more of a man of business, he might have seen the hand upon the wall. It was only a matter of the price of railway stock. But under the circumstances, that was enough. All through December, '63, and January, '64, the price of shares in the Cincinnati Northern Railway went steadily up. There were numerous small sales. Mr. Dayton congratulated his friends on a general return of prosperity. As I say, Mr. Dayton was nothing of a business man, and he had made a mistake not unusual with such people. He had put all his eggs in one basket and forgot to keep his hands on the basket.

Mr. Dayton had closed his law office three years before. He took down the sign of Dayton & Dayton, laid it across his desk, like the sword on a soldier's coffin, turned the key in his door and walked away from the law the day his sons went to the war. That door had not been unlocked since. At the beginning of this year, '64, his fortune was in four investments, only one of which gave him income. He had the town house, which was merely a source of expense; the farm, which barely supported itself; the newspaper, which was slowly falling behind, and, also, he had a great many shares of stock in the Northern Railway. He depended on these for his income. He was president of the board of direc-

ELEANOR DAYTON

tors, and he flattered himself that he was the head of the company.

It was in February, 1864, that he was undeceived. Though a large owner, he did not control a majority of the shares. One day the secretary of the company said to him: "Do you know, Mr. Dayton, it is odd, but I have been figuring a bit and a majority of our whole stock has changed hands during the last two months. There have been many small sales."

Still our simple-hearted old Enfield Dayton did not suspect things.

Suddenly there was a commotion in the office of the Northern Railway. In one day thirty-seven different holdings were transferred to the name of John Dawson. Mr. Dayton still owned his eggs, but it was Dawson who held the basket.

A few days afterward Dawson's confidential man came to see him. Stripped of verbiage, his proposition was this: If Mr. Dayton would sell the "Chronicle," Dawson would buy and that would end it; if not, two things would happen—a rival newspaper would be started and the Northern Railway would cease paying dividends.

Mr. Dayton ordered Dawson's emissary to leave the house. The next morning, over his own signature, there was printed in the "Chronicle" an exact



ELEANOR DAYTON

account of the conversation. That article made history. It killed Dawson as a candidate for Congress and put an end to his chance in politics. Financially speaking, it was Enfield Dayton's death-warrant. When he tried to get rid of some stock, a month later, he found that it would hardly be accepted as a gift.

Things dragged along through February and March and into April. On the fifteenth of the month occurred the second visit of Dawson's confidential man. Brutal as Dawson was, he shrank from crushing the Daytons unnecessarily. He renewed his offer for the "Chronicle" and proposed to let Mr. Dayton secure a majority of the Northern stock. But the old man's blood was up. He had nailed his colours to the mast. His three sons had died for a cause, why not he? He would never compound with evil. He gave Dawson threat for threat and went on in his courses.

And then came the twentieth of April and the annual meeting of the stockholders of the company. Mr. Dayton attended that meeting along with his oldest friends, with old Dr. Judson, old Colonel Mallon, and old Mr. Wilmot, Tom's father. He played the *rôle* of president in a gracious old-fashioned way to the last minute. When the election was over and he found himself out of office he de-

ELEANOR DAYTON

livered a formal welcome to Dawson as his successor. That grim man blinked a slow acceptance and observed he would hold a meeting of his board of directors at once.

"We intend," said he, "to relay the entire road with new rails and greatly increase the rolling stock. Everything on the road is in bad shape. We will not declare any dividends for the next two years, at least."

He turned to the reporters present and asked them if they had that straight. They replied they had.

"We are going to make this one of the great roads of the country," said he. "It is going to be the best thing for our city that was ever projected."

The four old gentlemen who had all been directors yesterday—Mr. Dayton, Dr. Judson, Colonel Mallon, Mr. Wilmot—walked away together. They talked about indifferent matters. Not one of them referred to the morning's business. They stopped at Mr. Wilmot's bank, went into his private office and took a glass of old Madeira as ancient as themselves. Then they separated upon their various ways.

Enfield Dayton went home with his usual firm step. He went into his study, shut the door and turned the key. He went to his secretary, sat down

ELEANOR DAYTON

and opened his diary. He wrote down a matter-of-fact account of the whole proceeding. He quoted Dawson's words, but did not comment upon them. He shut the diary and put it away. For a time he sat still, gazing at the picture of his wife. For four and twenty years he had not seen her, except in this picture which had been his companion during a portion of every day.

"Well," said he presently, "I am seventy-six years old and it won't be so very much longer now."

He took down the current volume of his manuscript, "Meditations on Scripture." Enfield Dayton left behind him a great mass of manuscript books consisting chiefly of two large groups. One group is composed of diaries; the other, of these "Meditations." They are expositions of Scripture, or lay sermons on Scriptural Texts, and each is dated. Under the date of "April 20, 1864," occurs a long dissertation upon the Book of Job. There are no personal references, nothing to imply that the writer saw himself in Job. It is merely a long argument, powerfully handled, full of classical quotations and with illustrations out of actual life, all as firmly done as a speech in court, and all in elaboration of the text: "Though He slay me yet will I trust in Him."

CHAPTER XXXVII

MR. DAYTON BEGINS AGAIN

ON the twenty-first of April, Enfield Dayton said, at breakfast: "Eliza, I will go to the office this morning."

Miss Eliza looked up quickly.

"Is it so bad as that, Enfield?"

She had known for some time what was coming.

"Yes," said he, "I must start over again and get back what I can of my practice."

Miss Eliza looked down and was silent."

"We must realize just where we stand," said the old man. "I am not quite bankrupt. We can pull enough out of the wreck to take a small house somewhere, and keep the girls in comfort. Of course, we must sell everything. The farm will fetch something; this house, quite a bit. The paper, I don't know about. Dawson is already advertising his great new journal with an editor from New York and a capital of a million. People will hesitate about buying the "Chronicle." But I can't keep it going. We are already falling behind in our expenses, and I dare not incur any further debts. Suppose,



ELEANOR DAYTON

Eliza, you begin looking about for a house at once."

"I will, Enfield; I'll begin to-day."

They had prayers where they sat, and the Scripture which Mr. Dayton read was: "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want."

Afterward, as he turned to the door, Miss Eliza stepped to his side and put her hand in his. Together these two old people walked silently down the long hall. At the door Mr. Dayton said: "The Lord knows best, Eliza."

"Yes, but it took me fifty years to learn that, Enfield." Then with a sudden smile, as her eyes filled, she added: "But I am sixty-three now."

The old man laughed softly. "And I am seventy-six. After all, we haven't much to complain of. By the way, I can just as well stop at the grocer's. We might as well take up things just as they used to be."

Miss Eliza had not thought of the grocer. She went back to the kitchen to speak a moment with the cook. When she returned Mr. Dayton gave the order exact attention.

"Now let me be sure," said he. "You want——"

And he repeated the list.

At the grocer's that morning no one suspected that the pleasant old man who spoke his orders so cheerfully was in any way disturbed. Nor did the

ELEANOR DAYTON

clerk in the counting-room of the "Chronicle," to whom Mr. Dayton had a word to say, on his way to his office. But the clerk looked up in surprise when the old man handed him a slip of paper and said: "Put that in as a reading notice." On the paper was written: "Mr. Enfield Dayton resumes practice as attorney and counsellor-at-law in his former office, No. 26 West Third Street."

Mr. Dayton unlocked his office and stepped into a dark and dusty room. Three years before, when he had locked it up, he had closed the shutters. Since then no one had opened it. The dust lay thick, making all the dark things seem velvety. The faint light through the slats of the shutters revealed the old sign lying on his desk, the name obliterated by dust.

Mr. Dayton walked across the room, threw up the windows and opened the shutters. His first thought was for the sign. It was a plain board, painted black, some three feet long, with the name "Dayton & Dayton" in gilt letters. Mr. Dayton carried it to a window, held it out and shook the dust into the air. He blew upon it. He took out his great silk handkerchief and dusted it. Then he took a chair, from which, as he moved it, flew up a cloud of dust, and carried it out into the hall. An iron rod projected from the wall at one side of the door. From the

ELEANOR DAYTON

rod depended two hooks; in the upper edge of the sign were two staples. Mr. Dayton climbed upon the chair, lifted up the sign and fitted the staples upon the hooks.

His next concern was to clean the office.

"Where," said he to himself, "did we keep the duster and the broom?"

He tried a closet, tried it softly so as to shake up no more dust than necessary—but it was the wrong one. In another closet he found what he wanted. He armed himself with an immense feather duster and went to work. He had never dusted a room before, but he could not imagine that the task was difficult. He began near the windows so as to let the dust begin escaping at once. He tried to sweep it in the direction of the windows, tried to make currents of air that would set that way. Frequently he retreated into the hall and paused a few moments to allow the room, in some measure, to clear; also, to clear his lungs.

It was not skilful dusting, but it was done. At least, his own desk and chair could be tolerated. He sat down at his desk; opened all the drawers; rearranged them one by one; made the top of it, with its inkpot, penholder, paper weights, the tall notarial seal, quite ship-shape; and then sat down to wait. He remembered a day, a lifetime since,



ELEANOR DAYTON

when his father gave him five hundred dollars, and he rented this same office and hung up a sign, and sat down and waited for practice.

“They say that history repeats itself,” said the old man to himself. “We shall see.”

CHAPTER XXXVIII

ELEANOR FINDS HER PLACE

“**D**O you say, aunty,” said Eleanor, “that the farm is already closed up?”

“Yes, my dear. Your uncle got the people there good places some time since. You know he has seen this coming for a good while.”

“Why didn’t you tell me, aunty?”

“What need? Nothing could be done.”

“And the dear old house must really go?”

“Yes, Eleanor.”

They were talking at the hospital several days after the reopening of Mr. Dayton’s office. Miss Eliza had been telling Eleanor how things stood.

“And now, dear, can you come this afternoon and look over the little house I am thinking of? It is rather out-of-the-way, to be sure, but I don’t suppose that matters much.”

“Of course not, aunty. Poor dear old uncle!—to begin work again at his age. And you, aunty. Oh, I am so proud of my blood. If we are unfortunate, at least we stand up to things.”

“Pride, Eleanor,” smiled Miss Eliza. “Don’t forget, by that sin fell the angels.”

ELEANOR DAYTON

"I won't forget," said Eleanor. "I haven't that sort of pride."

"That is true," said Miss Eliza.

They looked the little house over and Eleanor could not deny that it seemed to fit their needs.

"And yet, aunty, I don't like it. I don't want it."

"But what are we going to do?"

"Oh, I don't know. Let me think a day or two. There must be some way of keeping the old house. I know there must."

She went home with her aunt for supper, and though she talked cheerfully upon subjects that were dictated by chance, she appeared preoccupied. As she was going away she said: "Aunty, the stable has not been broken up, has it?"

"Not yet."

"Then I want my own horse day after to-morrow at nine o'clock. And you will put me up a little package of luncheon. I am going for my last ride."

Miss Eliza's lip quivered.

"I am so sorry it has to be the last, Eleanor."

"I'm not. What a trifle to be sorry about! Good-night."

She kissed her aunt and was gone.

Two days afterward, at nine in the forenoon, she mounted at the Dayton gate, waved her whip at her aunt, who was standing on the steps, and touched

ELEANOR DAYTON

her horse with the spur. It was May Day. Often it had occurred to Eleanor that she would like to spend May Day at the farm. Oddly enough, she could not remember ever having done so. And now, when the farm was to pass out of their hands, when it was already an empty place, she was riding out, alone, to spend May Day at the house in the hills, and say farewell. She had not told her aunt where she was going, for fear Miss Eliza might be nervous. As for Eleanor herself she felt nowadays that she had ceased to understand what fear meant.

The long ride to the east, through the budding spring landscape, the foreground so delicately green, the distance so softly violet, and over all such a radiant shower of gold, made other rides live in her memory. Especially, she thought of that ride which was the last she ever took in one company with Tom Wilmot, that ride in a shining August, five years ago. Only five years ago! It seemed a lifetime.

As she rode she kept seeing in the mind's eye how things looked on that other day. At this point Carroll had pointed northward and called attention to the splendid clouds. She remembered the look of them; they were different from the clouds to-day, mellow, the whites of them almost yellow in places. To-day the clouds were fleeces of pure white and

ELEANOR DAYTON

pearly grey. And the long wood just after she crossed the Little Miami River. To-day it was still an open network. The spring foliage had not become solid vaulting. On that August day five years ago this part of the road was like a cathedral aisle. It was here, just beyond the wood, that Tom and Olivia galloped past them, both riding so well. She remembered Carroll commented on their horsemanship. And it was just about here that she asked Carroll if he thought Tom was handsome. She had done it to tease him. Strange! How all these details lived forever in her heart!

She rode to the stable, took down the wooden bar and led her horse into the golden dusk of the great barn. He whinnied and drew back as if he, too, was aware that this was a place of phantoms. But Eleanor laughed and patted his neck. She coaxed him across the threshold, took off the saddle and haltered him in a stall.

She went to the house over which the first spring vines had already begun to clamber. There it lay, in the lonely sunshine of its grove of beeches, that rambling nest of cabins, with the unexpected passages zigzagging through it, and the swallows twittering among them, its brown walls and roofs speckled all over with scales of golden light. All about it were the thin shadows that are cast in



ELEANOR DAYTON

spring-time, and above it through a lattice of filmy branches the pale blue sky.

She came up into the porch and stood still looking about her. The vines had not yet given the porch an outer wall. Scattered ribbons of green hung along its edge and gave promise of what would be in August. How well she remembered now that Virginia reel in this very porch five years ago! That was to be her last dance with Tom. If only she could have known!

In what part of the porch had they danced? Was it here? No—a sudden gasp of fear stopped her heart. Could she have lost the place? Would she fail to identify it? No, no—it was all right, she remembered now. She and Tom took their places right under the rafter where hung the old squirrel rifle that had been her grandfather's. She remembered that Tom reached up and touched it one time between figures. This was the rafter. There were the big hooks.

As she stood there she shut her eyes and held forth her hand. In imagination it closed upon Tom's. They were dancing the reel again.

She opened her eyes, shook her head almost fiercely, drew a great gasping breath, and went to the door of that cabin which had been the living room. She had the keys of the place; she had

ELEANOR DAYTON

stopped for them at a farm house a mile nearer town; and now she unlocked the door. It was the same great room with its rough log walls, hung with skins, a flag, some bright old hunting prints. How many, many times she and Tom had sat before that fireplace! What rainy days they had spent in this room! What games had been played here in the biting autumn night when the wind across the hills roared like gales at sea!

Her own little room was a portion of the loft of this cabin. She climbed the stairs and went in and sat down on her own bed. She went to the window and threw it open. Suddenly she dropped upon the floor, laid her head upon the sill and shut her eyes. Again she saw the silver, moonlit night, again she was thinking foolish things about Apollo, again she heard the splendid bass tones, and from far away on the other side of the wood Tom thrilled her with "Under the Sounding Rafter."

After a time she rose up, dry-eyed, and went downstairs. Though the day was warm in the sun, the empty house was chill, and she was beginning to feel it. The wood-box in the living cabin was full and she knelt by the hearth and kindled a fire. She drew a chair in front of it and sat down. For a long while she sat still, her hands in her lap, her eyes upon the blaze. The past and the future, what had

ELEANOR DAYTON

been, what might have been, what would never be, moved in slow procession through her thoughts.

Again she had the eyes of a child and saw the world as the child saw it, that night on the steps of the Dayton house, long years before. She saw the stars and the black night and the mysterious door. She saw the tall man, the dear little old lady, the servants, the twinkling candles. She saw herself carried upstairs and laid in the great four-post bed. She saw the child start up in the midst of that great bed and fling her arms about her aunt's neck.

"And that closed door," she murmured, "and have I got it open at last?"

In her ears rang the words of Rosalie on her death-bed: "Life is a mystery and there are only two keys to it. One is Love, and the other is Sacrifice. The first is the golden one, and the second is only of silver. But both unlock the door."

Other pictures rose before Eleanor's eyes and moved slowly past.

She saw the garden at home, and herself and Tom—but not on the day when they talked about graves. This picture was of some time before that. Was it the first time she had ever seen Tom? She knitted her brow, but she could not remember. She could recall no earlier meeting. She felt, nowadays, as if she had known Tom always. Much as she

ELEANOR DAYTON

loved them, she did not feel thus toward her uncle and aunt. In their case, time had not altered the fact. She never forgot that she had met them first at a time she could remember. But the same should be true of Tom. And yet in his case it was all different. Somehow, the beginning of things had passed into her, become lost in her, merged and disappeared into the deepest part of her being.

Another picture of the garden and Tom. This time it was the day when they talked of graves. And then followed a long succession of pictures. She saw the drawing-room, bright spring sunshine, her uncle praying for the safety of the nation, and she saw the puzzled, childish face which sheathed such a troubled brain. It was that old problem of the mysterious door. What was her uncle so troubled about? He, like her, faced a door that was shut before him. And as this picture vanished she saw the companion to it. That same child an hour afterward lying upon the grass sobbing as if her heart would break, whelmed for the first time in love's sorrow.

As the pictures moved steadily past her she saw always the boy's figure—how far she had been at the time from ever dreaming what it signified! What had Tom to do, those days, with the mystery of the world? And that mystery was what had over-

ELEANOR DAYTON

shadowed her heart. She was one of those in whom the spirit had declared itself from the beginning, and all the circumstances of her childhood had co-operated to one result. Always there had been the premonition of things to come, of something too tremendous to be foreseen. But along with that had gone always the perfectly fruitless endeavour to foresee and to prepare. In this pageant of the spiritual life, passing now in review before her mind's eye, she saw the explanation of things. She saw the workings, unaware, in the girl's mind, of that impulse to disarm fate by anticipating it. She almost laughed, despite the dry burning of her eyes, despite the emptiness in her breast, as she watched the girl in her effort to get free from the dread of her own beauty. She saw again the children's party that day she put up her hair, that day she discovered she was beautiful, that day she saw the likeness between herself and Mary Carroll. But she saw also that evening at Dayton Manor, and her first sight of the horrid face that had gone wrong. And then she saw many a picture in which the girl sat alone and pondered those things. She saw the dread of becoming ugly take shape, and become her familiar, like an attendant spirit. She watched herself, steeling herself to resist it; resolving on her knees to save her heart and soul, even if

ELEANOR DAYTON

her body was foredoomed to be hideous. She heard the girl crying to her thoughts: "I will not be Mary Carroll, even if I come to look like her." And so in a sequence of visions she saw the girl by degrees form that strange conviction which had dominated her first youth; the belief that she should lose her beauty, and that the great struggle of her life would be to keep sweet and noble when adulation ceased. That was the key to her life about eighteen, nineteen, and twenty. That was why she had worshipped beauty so passionately in the abstract; why she had so dreaded the loss of her own; but why, also, she had refused so resolutely to be valued as a beauty herself. And now arose a picture from which she turned away with a moan and hid her eyes. She saw the morning parlour; she saw Tom; she saw herself. She felt the great thrill of joy like the surge of a wave with which, on that night, she had found her heart. And then she beheld herself deny her heart; she saw her own flippant rejection of him; she saw herself holding up the double miniature and asking with a laugh if he could love the ugly one.

"Oh, my own," she whispered, "if only we could have known!"

She threw out her arms and let them fall with a motion as of despair. She turned her head wearily

ELEANOR DAYTON

and her eyes encountered a mirror. What grandly tragic beauty looked forth at her. After all her premonitions, after all her preparations against fate, it had come to this. She was that glorious creature in the glass. There was no greater beauty anywhere; nor was there any woman more desolate and alone.

A new series of visions passed before her. She was at sea with Rosalie, hearing of Tom's doubt of himself in the wood; she was at Rosalie's death-bed hearing Rosalie's story, reading Tom's letter, learning of his searching of himself for her sake; she was in St. Antoine's studio and Napoleon was making his strange remark about her destiny; she was on the rock of Ushant; she was holding Tom's head in the peasant's hut; he had clasped her in his arms and his voice had rung out in its old tones, crying he would take care of her forever; she kissed him as he died.

She sprang to her feet gasping for breath. She cast herself down and burst into that passionate weeping known only to them who weep but seldom.

For a long while she lay prone, shaken through her veriest soul. But at last she lifted herself on her side.

"I have no right to do this," she murmured. "Oh, my own, I know you live and wait for me. It

ELEANOR DAYTON

will be well with us yet. And I will keep my promise to Rosalie; I won't lose faith. Give me your hand, dear."

She got up in a half-dream, her right hand closed as if over another. She looked at the glass. "They must not suspect this when I get home," she thought. "Now we'll go and straighten me up. Your girl is a good deal of a fool, my dear."

She went upstairs, still making pretence she was holding his hand. She brushed her clothes, did her hair, rubbed the tear stains from her face.

"Come, now, we'll go down again," said she.

Her watch told her it was nearly two o'clock. She had no desire to eat, but it would be foolish not to. She went into the dining-cabin, heated water and made tea.

"Now, dear," said she, "you sit there and I'll take this place, just as if we were in our own house."

She leaned her head on her hand and choked back a sob. But she was resolved to have no more tears. She forced herself to smile.

"It is so nice to be all by ourselves, isn't it, dear?" she said. Her voice was firm, though her eyes shone too brightly. "Now you tell me what I should do about uncle and aunt. I cannot bear to give up the old house. I want to keep it on any terms whatever.

ELEANOR DAYTON

And think, dear, how much of our time you and I have spent in it together. I hate that horrid little place Aunt Eliza has selected. And I have no fear of work, I have no fear of anything nowadays. And I don't care a straw what people say. You wouldn't have me, would you? You don't think it makes any difference how a woman supports herself if she is honest, do you? And your girl is poor as poverty now, dear heart. And we would keep the morning parlour to ourselves no matter what we do with the rest of the house, and that room will be yours and mine till I come to you."

She stretched her arms across the table and those shining eyes almost overflowed. But her will held fast.

"Yes, I know you approve," she added, "and I'm going to have my way."

She rose from the table and looked slowly around the room. Again she crooked her hand as if taking hold of another.

"Now, come, my own, we must say good-bye to this dear place."

She went out of the dining-cabin across to the other which had been the living-room and slowly climbed the stairs to her bedroom. Still she was keeping up the pretence of holding a hand. At the side of her bed she knelt down. And then once

ELEANOR DAYTON

more there was hard work for the will. But she won the fight.

"Kiss me," she whispered, "and I'll not disgrace you."

For a moment she held up her head, steadying her nerves. Then she put out an arm and crooked it as if slipping it around some one. Then she bent over and laid her face on the bed.

The shadows were lengthening eastward when Eleanor came out of the house, locked the doors, and with a firm step and star-like eyes walked away toward the stable.

Having seen to her horse and mounted from the horse-block in the stable yard, she did not, however, turn directly west. Instead she took that road through the wood from which branches the waggon track that leads to the cabin of the small-pox. She rode slowly up the track, past the cliff where is the great view, and drew rein close by the cabin door.

She sat upon her horse in silence, looking into the cabin; it was almost a ruin now. No one had occupied it since the days when Tom was imprisoned here in the shadow of death. The door stood open; the windows were open; the roof had fallen in; the wind blew through it. Eleanor looked about her up and down the waggon track, into the grove beside

ELEANOR DAYTON

the cabin. She knew all the details of the place from her talks with Rosalie. It was under those trees that the chairs had stood; there Tom and Rosalie had often talked together. They were there, one time, when Rosalie told Tom that he was not fickle, that he loved her truly, that he would find out his heart.

Eleanor wheeled her horse and gave him the spur. The trees whirled past them as she galloped recklessly down the hilly road. She did not draw rein until they were far to the west—not even at the cliff for the great view, where Tom and Rosalie had so often stood and talked, looking out upon a world that was forbid to them. Eleanor drooped over her pommel as she passed it.

“If only I could have been there, too,” she thought, “but I have stayed long enough for this day.”

The long ride back lasted well into the sunset. There was crimson along the west when she drew rein at the iron gate. To all appearances she was herself again—calm, smiling, splendid. She was the woman of the portrait by St. Antoine.

At supper she told where she had been.

“And now, uncle,” said she, “ring the curtain down. I have had my May Day and that was all that was needed to make my memories perfect.”

Miss Eliza looked down. She knew better than

ELEANOR DAYTON

that. But she was proud of Eleanor for keeping up appearances so bravely.

"And now," said Eleanor, "I have a scheme. I have been thinking it over for three days. I dare say you will both resist it, but I am going to have my way. Don't you think so?"

She looked from one to the other, smiling.

"What is it, dear?" said Miss Eliza.

Eleanor laughed.

"I am going to turn to account my experience at the hospital. For seven months I have been in charge. I have learned how to manage; how to keep down expenses; how to make every penny go as far as possible. I will bargain to run a hospital, or a hotel, or a steamship, or a boarding-house, at the lowest possible cost. Do you guess what I'm coming to?"

Miss Eliza leaned her head on her hand.

"I have thought of it, too, Eleanor," said she.

Eleanor pushed back her chair, went to her uncle and sat upon his knee.

"It will be an awful blow to your pride, dear, but you'll let me do it. You took me as an orphan, and you have cared for me all these years. Now you'll let me do something for you, even if it doesn't seem to you very dignified."

"Don't speak of the past, Eleanor, except with

ELEANOR DAYTON

thanksgiving," said the old man huskily. "You have been a great solace to me."

"And you will let me have my way?" she whispered. She had laid her head on his shoulder and he had drawn an arm about her.

"What is it, my dear?" said he.

"Won't you promise until I tell you? Won't you trust me to do nothing unworthy?"

"Of course I trust you. But what is your plan?"

Eleanor raised herself and looked him in the eyes.

"I mean, uncle, to keep this house and take people to board, and support you and aunty."

Enfield Dayton let fall his hand upon the table.

"Turn my home into a boarding-house!"

"Yes, uncle."

"Eleanor, I built this house as a present for my wife on our wedding anniversary."

"And if Aunt Lucy were living she would say just what I say," said Eleanor.

There was a space of silence.

"Eliza, what do you say?"

Miss Eliza had leaned her head upon her hand.

"I hate the idea of it just as much as you do, Enfield, but I agree with Eleanor."

The old man lifted Eleanor tenderly from his knee. He got up, walked to a window, and stood looking out into the soft spring night.

ELEANOR DAYTON

Several minutes passed.

Eleanor stole to his side and put her arm about him. "Uncle, think of a child who was left on your steps years and years ago, and give her a chance to do a little something for you."

There was another space of silence.

"Eleanor," said Mr. Dayton at last, turning around and facing them, "and you, too, Eliza, I cannot tell you how I dislike the idea of making this old home of ours a public place. But I know perfectly well that I am of little value nowadays as a lawyer. Very little of my practice will come back to me. And I cannot get much of a price for the house. It is a bad time to sell. One way and another, it will be a hard struggle to make ends meet if we should go on as I had planned to do. And so I have no right to let my pride, my sentiment, make things worse than they are. Yes, I submit, Eleanor; you may do what you please."

CHAPTER XXXIX

JOURNEYS END IN LOVERS' MEETING

BY the time the war was over and Carroll and Olivia came home, the two Miss Daytons had established their boarding-house. Sharp things had been said, of course. Sally Carter, who was now Mrs. Wingfield with unlimited money, tipped her nose.

"The false pride of some people," said she, "disgusts me. Why don't they sell the house and take a little place out of town?"

"They couldn't get a song for it, these days," said her husband, who was shrewd enough in business.

"Don't tell me that's the reason," said Sally. "They think they are somebody as long as they stick to the house. But they are nobody now and I hope it will teach them a lesson."

"Eleanor still has her beauty," said James Wingfield. "She could marry a fortune any day she chose."

"Indeed!" said Sally with a look that James knew well—a look that made him change the subject. For his beautiful wife, with the slight provision of brain, was as jealous as you make 'em.

ELEANOR DAYTON

Other people took different views of the matter.

Old Mr. Wilmot pleaded with Eleanor to let him adopt her as his daughter, but she steadily refused. "I am equal to making my own way in the world," she said, "and I mean to do it. Why shouldn't I keep a boarding-house? I am Eleanor Dayton still."

"You are the most beautiful woman in town, Eleanor," said the old gentleman sadly. "How strangely God orders things in this world! Here am I, rich as Croesus I dare say, and my son gone. You are a famous beauty, and where is the consolation?"

"There is none," said Eleanor. "But what of that? We have our parts to play, and we must play them out, and not whimper, till the curtain falls."

She and Mr. Wilmot had their last talk on the subject in the morning parlour on a day in June. When the old man had gone, she walked across the hall into the drawing-room and confronted the portrait by St. Antoine. She stood a while looking at it.

"Ah, mademoiselle," said she at last, "how little you guessed what life could be! You actually believed, once upon a time, that to be beautiful was to be happy. Farewell, mademoiselle, I intend to dispose of you. You will fetch a pretty penny in Paris."

She returned to the morning parlour. There on

ELEANOR DAYTON

the mantel-shelf was the double miniature, the young and the old Mary Carroll. There it had been ever since that night when she brought it down from her own room—that night when she used it as a barrier against Tom. How long, long since that seemed!

"You also have served your turn," said Eleanor. "I am done with you."

She had addressed the ugly miniature. Taking it down from the mantel, she picked up a heavy paper cutter and pried open the metal edges which held the miniature in its frame. Taking out the ivory, she snapped it into pieces and flung them into the empty fireplace.

"As to the other Mary," said she, "it can go back to my dressing-table. And now I must get ready for Carroll and Olivia."

They were expected that night. Olivia all this time had been a nurse at Chattanooga. Carroll had served with Thomas in Tennessee, got a second wound, and was just now honourably discharged from service. He had gone to Chattanooga. Olivia had got her release from the now empty hospital; together they were on their way home. They would be married as soon as Carroll could go to Maryland and return.

"Aunty," said Eleanor, coming into Miss Eliza's room, where the little old lady was sitting by a win-

ELEANOR DAYTON

dow sewing, "you know the children come home to-night."

"Yes, dear."

"I have put Olivia's room in order. What room shall I give Carroll?"

"The front one, I think, in the south wing—the same one he had last time."

"Let me think," said Eleanor. "Didn't he have that same room the first time he came here, when he came out to my ball?"

"I think he did, Eleanor."

"Poor old Carroll, how splendidly handsome he was. And it is all gone."

"But he has Olivia," said Miss Eliza.

The two women looked in each other's eyes and both thought the same thought, but neither spoke it.

After a short silence Eleanor turned away.

"I wonder whether he'd give up Olivia to get back his beauty? We might ask him." She laughed and left the room.

In her own room she put Mary Carroll back in her old place on the dressing-table.

"How many lifetimes is it," she thought, "since I put you there first?"

She went to her desk in the corner by the window and sat down. It was the same little desk which her

ELEANOR DAYTON

uncle gave her when a child. It had stood here for years.

She turned in her chair and gazed through the open window. The garden was bright with summer. Pleasant little warm breezes rustled in and stirred through her hair. Without, there was a white and blue sky above a world of gold and green. She moved nearer to the window and leaned forward so as to look into the back garden. Yes, there was the very plum-tree under which he and she were sitting that day so long, long since, when they talked of his mother's grave.

And Tom——

Eleanor leaned her head on her hand and thought of Carroll and Olivia. They were coming home this very night; in a few weeks they would be married.

Eleanor could never sit at this window without recalling the last time she heard Tom's voice across the garden. It was the night when she rejected him. This was the window at which she stood and looked across to the Wilmot house and saw the light in Tom's room. Here she was standing when his voice pealed forth, singing so nobly:

"One cup to the dead already,
And one to the next that dies."

ELEANOR DAYTON

Now, as then, Eleanor turned from her window with a sigh.

"But I mustn't dawdle," said she, "for there is a lot to do to-day. Carroll and Olivia will be back to-night. And besides, I must be thinking what I can afford in the way of a wedding present."

CHAPTER XL

SIC TRANSIT

CARROLL and Olivia were married and the years came and went. Dayton Manor had been burnt in the war, and so Mrs. Dayton came out to Cincinnati and made her home with her children. Robert Dayton died soon after the war. He never fully recovered from a wound he received at Fredericksburg.

In Cincinnati, old Enfield Dayton got back but a small part of his practice. Carroll, who had his degree of Bachelor of Law from the University of Virginia, was added to the firm, and so was young Enfield, Jr., the fourth son, the sole survivor of them all. He had done a man's part with Farragut, and had come unhurt through the rain of death at Mobile. The two younger men built up a new practice, and in time the firm of Dayton & Dayton regained its old prestige.

As to Eleanor and her aunt, their boarding-house was a great success. It was the largest, the most fashionable in town. And no one could have managed more ably than Eleanor. She threw herself

ELEANOR DAYTON

into the work with a systematic zeal that made everything tell. Her experience at the hospital bore fruit in a mastery of all sorts of detail. Her accounts were a perfect specimen of bookkeeping; her table as skilfully planned as the best in Paris; her profits, large. The two Miss Daytons were prosperous women, financially speaking, after their second year in business.

And still Eleanor was the most beautiful woman in town. Several fortunes were laid at her feet, but she only laughed and said she preferred to be independent. Even a title did not tempt her. It was none other than that of the Rt. Hon. Sir James Orville, Bart., second of the honour, who visited Cincinnati in the year '70. He was the owner now of the great portrait by St. Antoine. Eleanor had sent it to Paris in 1864, and set up her boarding-house with the proceeds. It was bought by the Duc de Brisson, and when he died in the year '68, it came again on the market. Sir James had succeeded his father a few months before and was then in Paris. His first wife was still living. Doubtless she knew nothing of that mild flirtation at Nice and the dramatic scene in St. Antoine's studio long years before; or if she did, it did not trouble her. Lady Orville was not the sort that put faith in the permanence of impressions. She

ELEANOR DAYTON

and her sister, Lady Sefton, were the best of friends. But when she died, in 1869, Sir James showed a manly fortitude that was much admired. A year later he made this fruitless pilgrimage to the West. Two years thereafter he married the Dowager Duchess of Wessex, not a young woman, but a beauty still, irreproachable in position and rich in her own right. And so, Sir James, we bow you out. Fortunate man who has never been tyrannized by an impression!

To return to the beautiful workwoman in Cincinnati. She had other sources of income besides her boarding-house; she was so capable, she kept up her French so well, she was so marked with distinction, that rich people took to asking her to go abroad with their daughters. Summer after summer she would sail for Europe with two or three girls in tow, and by this service she earned a pretty penny. For Eleanor was a hard-headed woman of business. She gave honest return for her money, but she knew what her wares were worth and she charged full price.

But now and then she gave herself a recess, and one of these was in the summer of 1872. She and Carroll and Olivia and the children spent that summer in rambling about England. Miss Eliza had refused to go. She was over seventy

ELEANOR DAYTON

now, and she said that her travelling days were done.

"Don't be gone from me too long, my dear," she had whispered to Eleanor. "I depend on you so much. But, of course, I want you to have a good recess."

Eleanor looked long into her aunt's eyes ere she kissed her and said good-bye. These two were such close friends!

And in passing, one may note that Constantia had gone to her place. Miss Eliza and Eleanor often talked of her, and of Rosalie. Often in a winter twilight Eleanor would make a pause in her occupation and sit at her aunt's feet with her head on the old woman's knee, just as if she were a girl again, and they would talk of the two nuns whom they loved; of Eleanor's service in Constantia's hospital; of Rosalie's death-bed; of those long, long nights at sea, way back in the year '59, when Eleanor and Rosalie became friends; of that far-off past when Rosalie entered their lives through the wood of the pestilence.

Well, it was the end of the summer of 1872. Eleanor and Carroll and Olivia had gone down for a time to Chiselhurst, so that the two children, little Robert and little Eleanor, should have an idling, airy time before they sailed for home. Eleanor was

ELEANOR DAYTON

very fond of these children and many a care was slipped off Olivia's shoulders by the dexterous unobserved manipulation of the older woman.

The end of our tale is a golden afternoon when Carroll and Olivia had gone out with the children for a long walk. They meant to come clear around an oval and get back to Chiselhurst about sunset. Eleanor had some letters to write. She would come out later, taking the opposite course to theirs and meet them.

It was well into the afternoon when she set out, and was soon walking eastward along the road by which she knew they would return toward the west.

I wonder, now, how many of us remember who was living in Chiselhurst town that year, '72? The road on which Eleanor was walking passed the gates of Camden Place. Eleanor paused and looked through them. Twelve years had passed since that day at St. Antoine's. What things had occurred since then! How different her life to-day from anything she had ever dreamed of as a girl! And that sphinx-like Napoleon—that image of fate who had spoken the word of doom upon herself, what of him! He was Emperor then. He was fallen now, and here he lived—all his schemes, audacities, triumphs, taken from him—in the quiet of Camden Place.

ELEANOR DAYTON

Eleanor walked on toward the east, skirting the grounds of Napoleon's retreat. That day at St. Antoine's became more and more distinct in her memory. She saw it all as in a picture. She saw the Emperor, she saw her own portrait, saw the insolent Lady Sefton, the handsome, shallow Captain Orville, the fine old Metier. She saw herself as she flung the wine-glass across the room.

She stopped in her walk, feeling a strange desire to behold again that inscrutable face. It stood out against the past as the sign of the very last incident before her trouble overtook her. She looked about, and there in a clump of firs was a little gate and a path. She opened the gate, passed into the shadow of the firs and along the path. Before she realized what she was doing she was on the edge of the lawn of Camden.

Eleanor stopped short.

"I have no business here," she thought.

But she lingered a moment, looking across the lawn toward the house and thinking what all this signified, this obscure retreat of the fallen Emperor, in the heart of an alien land. She thought of Sedan, Metz, Mars-le-Tour.

She was startled by a footstep behind her. It was coming along the path from the road. She turned and faced Napoleon.

ELEANOR DAYTON

Eleanor drew to one side and courtesied low. He glanced at her and touched his hand to his hat, though he did not lift it. She saw the same mask-like face, the same lustreless eyes, and in addition an intense expression of weariness. *Sic transit gloria mundi!*

But as Napoleon passed her there was a slight change in his face, and he looked a second time. He went a step or two farther, then he paused, hesitating, and turned about.

"Pardon, madame, am I forgetful? I must sometimes apologize for my memory these days."

Again Eleanor courtesied.

"No, sire, I am merely an intruder who was looking at your house."

Napoleon looked at her as if making an effort to recall something.

"And yet, madame—I suppose it is madame?"

"Mademoiselle," said she.

"Ah, I have seen your face, mademoiselle."

He was silent a moment.

"I have it now," said he in the same languid tone, "it was a portrait in the collection of the Duc de Brisson. Were you ever painted by St. Antoine?"

"Yes, sire. My portrait became part of the Duke's collection."

ELEANOR DAYTON

"You will pardon my forgetfulness, mademoiselle. Sedan has occurred since I saw it last. Bon jour."

He passed on, walked slowly across the lawn and entered the house. Eleanor stepped back into the clump of firs where she was shielded on every side, and stood a while by herself.

Presently she heard the shouts of children—two voices which she knew. She turned toward the road around a bend in the path and came to the gate just as the two little ones raced by.

Eleanor looked eastward, and there, still some distance away, Carroll and Olivia were coming down the slope of the road. They were walking hand in hand, they were bare-headed and the sunlight was on their faces. Olivia was looking up into Carroll's eyes, Carroll was looking down into hers.

Just then Olivia's clear voice rippled out in a tender, smiling melody, a song of the laughter of feeling, gay and bright upon the surface, deep and steadfast underneath. Eleanor could hear the words. They were Tennyson's:

"Bird's song and bird's love
Passing with the weather;
Man's song and man's love
To love once and forever."

Eleanor stepped back quickly into the shadow of

ELEANOR DAYTON

the firs and they passed her by. She did not come forth again until the last echo of that tender voice had died away into the west. When she stepped out into the empty road and turned her face toward the sunset, there were pealing in her heart those other lines:

"Eternal form shall still divide
The eternal soul from all beside,
And I shall know thee when we meet."

FINIS.

MERCANTILE LIBRARY,
NEW YORK.



THE COUNTRY HANDBOOKS

A Series of Illustrated Practical Handbooks dealing with Country Life. Suitable for the Pocket or Knapsack. Under the General Editorship of

HARRY ROBERTS

16mo (6½ by 4 in.)

Price, bound in Limp Cloth, \$1.00 net

Price, bound in Limp Leather, 1 20 net

Volumes Now Appearing :—

- Vol. I. THE TRAMP'S HANDBOOK. *By H. Roberts*
- Vol. II. THE MOTOR BOOK. *By R. J. Macready*
- Vol. III. THE STILL ROOM. *By Mrs. Roundell*
- Vol. IV. THE BIRD BOOK. *By A. J. R. Roberts*
- Vol. V. THE TREE BOOK. *By Mary R. Jarvis*
- Vol. VI. THE WOMAN OUT OF DOORS. *By M. M. Dewis*
- Vol. VII. THE HORSE BOOK
- Vol. VIII. THE FISHERMAN'S BOOK

THE NEW POCKET LIBRARY

Printed from a clear type, upon a specially thin and opaque paper manufactured for the Series

16mo (6 by 3¼ in.)

Price, bound in Cloth, 50 cents net

Price, bound in Leather, 75 cents net

Volumes Already Published :—

- Vol. I. ADAM BEDE. *By George Eliot*
- Vol. II. SCENES OF CLERICAL LIFE. *By George Eliot*
- Vol. III. THE MILL ON THE FLOSS. *By George Eliot*
- Vol. IV. SILAS MARINER. *By George Eliot*
- Vol. V. BARCHESTER TOWERS. *By Anthony Trollope*
- Vol. VI. DR. THORNE. *By Anthony Trollope*
- Vol. VII. THE WARDEN. *By Anthony Trollope*
- Vol. VIII. FRAMLEY PARSONAGE. *By Anthony Trollope*
- Vol. IX. LAVENGRO. *By George Borrow*
- Vol. X. THE ROMANY RYE. *By George Borrow*
- Vol. XI. THE BIBLE IN SPAIN. *By George Borrow*
- Vol. XII. THE ZINGALI. *By George Borrow*
- Vol. XIII. THE SCARLET LETTER. *By Nathaniel Hawthorne*
- Vol. XIV. THE HOUSE WITH THE SEVEN GABLES
By Nathaniel Hawthorne

ELEANOR DAYTON

By Nathaniel Stephenson

Author of "They That Took the Sword," "The Beautiful Mrs. Moulton," etc.

12mo. \$1.50

New York Times, Saturday Review: "Mr Stephenson's style is fresh and good ; it is easy, and free from mannerism, and characterised by the personal tone of the narrator who has grown up on the scene of his story and knows his characters intimately."

The Boston Herald: "Mr. Stephenson is a man of scholarly taste, very wide reading in the best English literature, and has a graceful and polished style."

THE HOUSE ON THE SANDS

By Charles Marriott

Author of "The Column," "Love with Honour," etc.

12mo. \$1.50

Mr. Julian Hawthorne: "Marriott is deeply welcome and full of wholesome succulence. He paces up and down, as it were, in a hall where all is harmonious and proudly beautiful, even fastidious. . . . Mr. Marriott comes among us an alien ; but he is welcome, for he brings with him a beauty which lifts and purifies the mind."

BORLASE AND SON

By T. Baron Russell

Author of "The Mandate," "A Guardian of the Poor," etc.

12mo. \$1.50

The Saturday Review: "Since Tom Hood sang 'The Song of the Shirt,' no grimmer, more convincing — and, let us add, more artistic — contribution has been made to what may be called the literature of the sweater than 'The Guardian of the Poor.'"

A GIRL'S LIFE IN A HUNTING COUNTRY

By Handasyde

12mo. \$1.00 net

An Illustrated Edition of
THE CARDINAL'S SNUFF-BOX

By Henry Harland

Illustrated by G. C. Wilshire

12mo. \$1.50

The ordinary edition of this delightful and famous novel having run into its hundredth thousand, the Publisher feels sure of a cordial welcome for the new Illustrated Edition. Author and artist have conferred together throughout its preparation; and a very complete work of art is the result.

MADemoisELLE MISS

By Henry Harland

Author of "The Cardinal's Snuff-Box," "The Lady Paramount," "Grey Roses," "Comedies and Errors," etc.

New Edition. 12mo. \$1.00

This favourite volume by the author of "The Cardinal's Snuff-Box" has long been out of print. It is now re-issued, with some additional stories, in a fresh dress.

WHERE LOVE IS

By W. J. Locke

Author of "Idols," "The White Dove," "Derelicts," "The Usurper," etc.

12mo. \$1.50

The Chicago Post: "It is safe to predict for Mr. Locke a steadily widening popularity with us. Indeed, it is not unlikely that a few years will find him more readers in America than in Great Britain; there are so many of us when we are moved to enthusiasm."

GEE BOY

By Cyrus Lauron Hooper

16mo. \$1.00 *net*

THE MS. IN A RED BOX

By an Unknown Author

12mo. \$1.50

It is not often that an author is so apathetic concerning the fate of his Ms. as to send it to a publisher without title, and without name or address for purposes of communication.

Recently there was left at the Bodley Head, in London, a Ms. of unusual merit, which proved to be an historical novel with plot in the Seventeenth century. In vain Mr. Lane advertised for its author. He was not, and is not at present, to be found.

Such eminent critics as Professor York Powell, Mr. Henry Harland, Mr. W. J. Locke, Mrs. W. K. Clifford, Mr. I. N. Ford, of the New York Tribune, etc., gave the benefit of their suggestions to the Publisher, and it was finally decided to issue the work under the title

THE MS. IN A RED BOX

which is now to be had at all libraries and booksellers, dedicated to its unknown author, by the Publisher.



**This book is under no circumstances to be
taken from the Building**

[illegible]

Form 4100



